

SUNDAY SCHOOL JOURNAL

for
TEACHERS
AND
YOUNG PEOPLE.

NEW SERIES.

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General Conference.

THE nineteenth delegated General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church closed its session in Philadelphia on Wednesday evening, the 28th of May. It was one of the strongest, most industrious, and most faithful of all the General Conferences which have been held in the Church. Every subject submitted to it by resolution and memorial was considered in regular or special committees. Upon every subject these committees reported to the General Conference, and on every report the Conference took action. There was very little absenteeism, the Conference insisting that the brother asking to be excused should give good reason. In more than one case permission was refused.

Questions of great importance, affecting the structure, polity, and doctrines of the Church, came before the body. As is usual in General Conferences, a spirit of conservatism prevailed.

A characteristic of the Conference was the fraternal spirit which controlled its exercises from beginning to end. There was no want of freedom or fervor in debate. Some very plain things were said, sometimes in plainer phrase than was really necessary, but there were few if any personalities.

The election of Bishops took place on Thursday, May 15, and four good men and true were selected. It is believed by devout Methodists that the Church is under the guidance of the divine Providence in the movements by which her chief shepherds are selected. The more carefully we examine the men themselves, and the fields to which they have been assigned, the more thoroughly we are satisfied that this wise and loving Providence was present. The South and West will receive especial attention from the new class of Bishops. Who could render better service to the Southern field, with Atlanta or Chattanooga as its center, than the practical, indefatigable, kind-hearted BISHOP WALDEN? Who would be

better adapted to the South-western field, with New Orleans or Austin as its center, than the radical, energetic, evangelical, and consecrated BISHOP MALLET? Who more likely to grapple with the strong factors of the Pacific civilization, or build up a more aggressive type of Methodism, than the brilliant, eloquent, vigorous, and persistent BISHOP FOWLER? And if the Church—North, South, East, and West—needed in these days another representative of the gentleness, sweetness, and fidelity of the apostle John, who could so well represent these as the beloved BISHOP NINDE? And there is not wanting some of the lion in that lamb.

The policy of the Church in the election of a "Missionary Bishop" will find most favorable conditions for the experiment, since Africa was chosen as the field, and WILLIAM TAYLOR, itinerant, evangelist, writer, and apostle, was selected as such Bishop. There is in this lion much of the lamb.

Action of the most progressive character was taken concerning Sunday-school work by the Philadelphia General Conference. We are to have more and better library books, more papers, and more work. The future is brilliant with promise for the Sunday-school department.

The writer of these lines was again chosen Corresponding Secretary of the Sunday-School Union, and Editor of the Sunday-School Publications, by a surprisingly large vote. He enters upon his fifth quadrennium of service with new inspirations and resolves, and he hereby challenges presiding elders, preachers in charge, Sunday-school superintendents and teachers, to co-operate in the development of our Sunday-school work, that we may raise up a generation of Bible students who shall love Christ, be true members of the Holy Catholic Church, and loyal servants of that noble branch of it which we all love—the Methodist Episcopal Church.

A Lovely Life.

DURING the weariness and excitements of the General Conference we read a book which was like daily manna to the soul. It gave us good company and good cheer, and lifted us above the strife and heat of the work-a-day Church world. We have re-read portions of it, and have recommended it again and again in parlor and pulpit. Our readers shall have the benefit of a hint, and if any number of them are thereby induced to buy and read *The Life of Elizabeth Prentiss*, published by Anson D. F. Randolph, of New York, the writer of these lines will be both glad and grateful.

Mrs. Prentiss was the author of *Stepping Heavenward*. Her father was the honored Dr. Edward Payson, a man of precious memory. Her life is chiefly recorded in her own letters, which her husband, the Rev. Dr. Prentiss, has skillfully and affectionately woven together by many golden threads.

It is a charming book. The frankness and force, the tenderness and naturalness, of *Stepping Heavenward* constantly appear in its pages. It is the letter-book and journal of an earnest and cultivated woman.

She had rare natural ability, refined tastes, a profound conviction of truth, strong faith in God's word, a most susceptible and affectionate heart, and was a constant student and worker. How ardently she loved! How fervently she prayed! How indefatigably she worked! How patiently she suffered!

No woman can read this remarkable book without great profit. It does not tend to morbidness or self-inspection. It is throughout natural, wholesome, and inspiring.

We write this notice to suggest that two or more copies go at once into every Sunday-school library, and that pastors, superintendents, and teachers make an effort to induce young ladies and their mothers to read it. The book is needed to reprove and correct the frivolity and worldliness of the average American home. Ministers and their wives should read it as a model of wise ways for winning souls, and of ordering a household.

The C. L. S. C.

THE Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle is a school at home, a school after school, a college for one's own house, by which he may become acquainted in a general way with the college world into which so many of our young people go, about which their parents know so little, and the benefits of which college people themselves need to recall in their later years.

It is for busy people who left school years ago, and who desire to pursue some systematic course of instruction.

It is for high-school and college graduates, for people who never entered either high-school or college, for merchants, mechanics, apprentices, mothers, busy housekeepers, farmer boys, shop-girls, and for people of leisure and wealth who do not know what to do with their time. College graduates, ministers, lawyers, physicians, accomplished ladies, are taking the course. They find the required books entertaining and useful, giving them a pleasant review of studies long ago laid aside. Several of our members are over eighty years of age. Very few are under eighteen.

The C. L. S. C. Course requires about forty minutes' time a day for the term of four years. It need not be done every day, although this is a desirable way to carry on the work. The readings are comprehensive, clear, simple, and entertaining. They vary, of course, in interest according to the taste of the reader.

More than sixty thousand names are enrolled in this so-called "People's University." Although not a university at all, it has put educational influence, atmosphere, and ambition into the homes of the people which will lead many thousands of youth to seek the education which colleges and universities supply.

It is an easy thing to join the C. L. S. C.; no preliminary examination is required; indeed, no examination is required at any time. Members are expected to fill out certain simple memoranda year after year, and forward them to the central office of the C. L. S. C. at Plainfield, N. J. But this is no task at all.

Persons may join the C. L. S. C. for one year. A full course requires four years, and even after graduation one may continue to read on and add seals for years to the diploma which he receives at the end of the first four years.

The course embraces simple, entertaining, and instructive reading in ancient and modern history and literature, in physical, mental, and moral science, and in all matters that pertain to a true life, physical, intellectual, industrial, domestic, social, political, and religious. It is unsectarian and unsectional, promoting good fellowship and fraternity, inspiring help to the home, the Church, and the State. All are alike welcome to its fellowship.

The C. L. S. C. was organized in 1878. The class that joined then read four years, that is, 1878-79, 1879-80, 1880-81, 1881-82. In 1882 this class was graduated, and its members are still known as belonging to the "Class of 1882." Those who began in 1879 were graduated four years later, and form the "Class of 1883."

This summer the class that began in 1880 will be graduated as the "Class of 1884."

The "Class of 1885" began in 1881.

The "Class of 1886" began in 1882.

The "Class of 1887" began in 1883.

And now those who begin the course of the C. L. S. C. in the fall of 1884 may form the C. L. S. C. "Class of 1888."

The readings of the several classes for any one year are substantially the same. The course marked out below for the year beginning October, 1884, and closing in June, 1885, will be:

The *first* year for the "Class of 1888."

The *second* year for the "Class of 1887."

The *third* year for the "Class of 1886."

The *fourth* year for the "Class of 1885."

The C. L. S. C. has the spirit of delightful fellowship that belongs to the college; its "mottoes," "songs," "memorial days," "vesper services," "diplomas," "commencement days," public "recognitions," "seals," "badges," "class gatherings," "alumni reunions," etc., etc., give to it a peculiar charm and kindle enthusiasm among its members.

The course of study for 1884-85 is as follows:

"Beginner's Hand-book of Chemistry," Prof. Appleton.

Scientific readings in the CHAUTAUQUAN: "The Circle of the Sciences;" "Huxley on Science;" "Home Studies in Chemistry," by Prof. J. T. Edwards; "Easy Lessons in Animal Biology," Dr. J. H. Wythe; "The Temperance Teachings of Science;" and "Studies in Kitchen Science and Art." (The CHAUTAUQUAN is published by Dr. T. L. Flood, Meadville, Pa. Price, \$1 50 per annum.)

"Barnes's Brief History of Greece."*

"Preparatory Greek Course in English,"† Wilkinson.

"College Greek Course in English," Wilkinson.

"Chautauqua Text-book, No. 5. Greek History," Vincent.

"Cyrus and Alexander," Abbott.

"The Art of Speech," Dr. L. T. Townsend.

General readings in the CHAUTAUQUAN: "Talks About Good English," etc.

"The Character of Jesus," Horace Bushnell.

"How to Help the Poor," Mrs. James T. Fields.

"History of the Reformation," Bishop J. F. Hurst.

"Sunday Readings" in the CHAUTAUQUAN.

Readings in OUR ALMA MATER:‡ "Lessons in Every-day Speech," Prof. W. D. MacClintock; "Lessons in Household Decoration, Miss Susan Hayes Ward; "Lessons in Self-Discipline: Thinking, Memory, Selection of Book," etc., "Official Communications to members."§

For information concerning the C. L. S. C. address Dr. J. H. VINCENT, Plainfield, N. J.

* Not to be read by the classes of 1885, '86, and '87.

† Not to be read by the classes of 1885, and '86.

‡ The ALMA MATER is sent free to all members of the C. L. S. C. who are recorded at Plainfield, N. J., and whose annual fee is paid.

§ To recorded members several other valuable documents are forwarded free without additional expense.

Stay-at-Home Birds.

O THE stay-at-home birds in July and August, the little folks that never get away from home, never smell of the flowers so mystical to them, the clover-heads, the wild roses, and the field daisies, never see the roll of the white, cool surf, never hear a hob-o-link's sweet, crazy madrigal. Their school-mates, Royal and Victoria and Alexander, birds whose wings are gold-lined, have flocked to the shore and the mountains, but bare-footed Bill and Joe and Sukey have been in town all along, and will be longer. Is Sunday-school or church open for them? If you will only give them a chance to fly in, you will see the stay-at-home birds in their Sunday nests every Lord's day. Don't give up Sunday-school or lock the church door, if you can help it. Are the teachers migratory birds also, who are skimming the Newport sands or chirping up the breezy slopes of Mount Washington? Then group the scholars at school for a general exercise. Keep open doors though, in some way, and give the stay-at-home birds a chance to get at their nests.

Realities.

A CORRESPONDENT writes concerning the importance of teaching realities in preference to abstractions. He refers especially to family instruction, and, assuming the intelligence of the parents, suggests that they make free use of the objects around them as subjects of investigation. For instance:

"What is the air you breathe, and why does it fan you? What is the water you drink, the salt and the bread you eat? Why does the fire-cracker explode, and what is the noise it makes? What is the ground, and why will a kernel of corn and not a pebble grow out of it? What is the burning of fire and the blaze of a lamp? are questions which indicate the line of thought I have in view. The fact that the atmosphere and the atoms that form water are invisible and of unknown essence can be used as a stepping-stone to a knowledge of the invisible and incomprehensible nature of the Creator. That portion of Nature's volume which is exposed to our senses I think should be the child's primer. His mind will then be brought early into contact with truth, with truth that it can see and feel is truth. A capacity will thus be awakened to receive truth, to love it, and hate shams and frauds."

In religious instruction we would have these used, as the Saviour used them, to illustrate and enforce spiritual truths. Thus, through the interest excited by the realities that are seen, there may be an interest developed in the realities that are unseen.

What Aim?

ONE evening in a parlor at a summer watering-place the young people were dancing. One young lady was not taking any part in the exercise. "Does not your daughter dance?" asked another lady of

this young lady's mother. "No," was the reply. "Why, how will she get on in the world?" "I am not bringing her up for the world," was the quiet answer. That young lady is now a woman, and the influence of her consecrated life is felt in many of the Christian interests of a great city. But, for what are you bringing up your daughters, dear mothers of other young girls? What aim have you for them? You brought them and gave them to God in baptism. Were you sincere? Did you mean that they should indeed be "lent unto the Lord," as long as they live? Are you bringing them up for the Lord, or for the world? What are your dreams and ambitions for them? What do you want to see them become? Do you want them to shine in society, to "marry well," to live in wealth? Is that the vision that fills your soul when you think of them? Look on a little farther. Life is short. Suppose your dream is fulfilled—is it any thing more than a dream? What lies beyond? The curtain is drawn and there is the hushed chamber of death. What do you want for your child then? The curtain is drawn again and eternity opens. What would your fond affection choose for her then? It is better to think matters of this kind through to the end.—*Westminster Teacher.*



How to Mount and Use the Leaf Cluster.

BY W. C. R. KEMP.

TAKE four pieces of dressed lumber, one inch by one and a half inches, six feet long; four cross bars, one inch longer than the Leaf Cluster is wide; two two-inch rollers same length. Between two of the six-foot pieces nail two of the cross bars, one a half inch from the top end, and the other twelve to eighteen inches up from the bottom end. This is for the front of the frame. Make the rear frame the same way, except the top bar wants to be lower down. Now hinge the two frames together at the top so they will work like a step-ladder. Three feet down from the top of the front frame put in one of the rollers. A crank made of quarter inch iron, made square or sharpened at one end, and put through a hole in the side bar, and driven in the end of

roller, answers every purpose. A short piece driven in the other end of roller makes a pivot for it to turn on. Insert the other roller in the rear part of the frame in same way, with a crank also. Now take the cluster and cut the leaves apart close up to the strip they are mounted on. Paste them together, end to end, until all are in one continuous sheet. Care should be taken to have the title-page at the top end of the sheet. Begin pasting by using a strong piece of paper of any kind, three feet long, and to this attach the top of the title-page. Now paste to the back roller, and roll up the entire sheet; draw the other end over the top bar, (which should be made rounding and smooth,) and paste fast to the front roller. Now roll the sheet back onto the front roller, and you have it. All the teacher has to do is to turn the rear roller until the lesson for the day comes in view, and on review day you have a grand panorama of Sunday-school lessons.

I send a pencil sketch of the machine to more clearly explain it. Any person that can handle tools at all can make one in two hours' time, and when once used would not do without it.

Religious Novels.

Thirteenth Paper.

BY MRS. V. C. PHOEBUS.

"Miss EDGEWORTH's admirable fictions possess great merit in view of their simplicity of style, the homeliness of their sentiments, and the mediocrity of the characters portrayed. They possess the recommendation, too, of embracing the lower tables of morality, and rarely meddling with that which fiction should not dare to touch;" * that is, they do not deal with deep spiritual truths; in other words, are not "religious novels."

The question of the use or abuse of the religious novel becomes a vital one to the Christian Church; it would take space which is not at my disposal, to attempt to argue the question at all, to draw the distinction between a moral or ethical novel and a distinctly religious one, to show that a tale or poem constructed for the single aim of enforcing certain truths, whatever those truths may be, suffers materially as a tale or poem, and is liable to be distorted from its true presentation of nature in order to show the truth, or supposed truth, the writer has set himself to unfold.

There is a homely adage that "the proof of the pudding is in the eating." I have attempted to apply this by trying to ascertain how many, among my friends and acquaintances, have been quickened to a deeper spiritual life by the reading of a religious novel. I have been able to make no exhaustive examination, but, as yet, I have found but one who recalled deep religious impressions, leading on to a holier living, from the perusal of a religious novel.

"The sense, to a healthy mind, of being strengthened or enervated by reading is just as definite and unmistakable as the sense, to a healthy body, of

* "Home Education," by Isaac Taylor.

being in fresh or foul air; and no more arrogance is involved in forbidding the reading of an unwholesome book than in a physician's ordering the windows to be opened in a sick-room. There is no question, whatever, concerning these matters with any person who honestly desires to be informed about them; the real arrogance is only in expressing judgments of books respecting which we have taken no trouble to be informed."

In the question I have suggested, I, of course, include no such work of fiction as Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." The most careless reader will not fail to see that there is no resemblance between that work and our modern religious novel.

That we may avoid the arrogance of expressing judgments, either favorable or otherwise, upon the influence of books about which we have taken no trouble to inform ourselves, would it not be well to question the experience of the Church? If every pastor, superintendent, teacher, parent, etc., who may read these few lines, will write to me, stating what one book, other than the Bible, has had the deepest influence upon his spiritual life, a published digest of the number writing, and the proportionate influence claimed for sermons, biography, poetry, religious novels, etc., might furnish some clew as to whether the wonderful activity in the preparation and distribution of this class of literature is justified by its influence.

Please mention not only the class of books, but the book itself, which has been most instrumental in developing the Christian life in your case; if you cannot choose between several, mention them all.

If a novel has been deeply instrumental in helping you, though not pre-eminently so, please name it.

Don't Attempt to Deceive Children.

Nothing can be a greater mistake than to consider young people as destitute of understanding; their understanding should rather be appealed to and consulted. Do we not all remember how, when young, we were imposed upon? how our elders sought sometimes to put us off; how they gave us evasive answers or explanations; how they told us some plausible story as an excuse or as a reason? And do we not remember that even in our youth and simplicity we were quite capable of seeing through their maneuvers? Do we not all remember how, when any one endeavored to keep us in ignorance of some proceeding of which we were made accidentally cognizant, we could divine very correctly the real motive for sending us out of the way with some idle excuse? Now, in a case of this kind, which comes within the pale of parental authority, the will of the parent alone ought to be sufficient to control the child. But there should be no stifling of truth and no relaxation of duty. If, as often will happen, it is not expedient or proper for children to know a particular fact or incident, they should be told so with frankness and kindness, but at the same time with firmness. We are too apt to overlook the intelligence of these little peo-

ple and address ourselves to their stature. We forget mind, which is invisible, in the presence of matter, which is seen. The treatment of children must always, for their own sakes, differ much from that of full-grown men and women; our manner of addressing them must also be different; but there does not seem to be any reason why we should not give them full credit for the amount of intelligence they do possess; and we may every day see children with more discrimination, greater good sense, and better regulated moral deportment, than many whose tall figure or riper age has invested them with the consequence of men and woman.—*The Family Friend*.

Opening and Closing Services for Third Quarter of 1884.

OPENING SERVICE.

I. SILENCE.

II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.

SUPT. I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD.

SCHOOL. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.

SUPT. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together:

SCHOOL. Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD.

SUPT. For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David.

SCHOOL. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.

SUPT. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.

SCHOOL. For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee.

SUPT. Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good.

LESSON SERVICE.

I. CLASS STUDY OF THE LESSON.

II. SINGING LESSON HYMN.

III. RECITATION OF THE TITLE, GOLDEN TEXT, OUTLINE, AND DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION, by the school in concert.

IV. REVIEW AND APPLICATION OF THE LESSON, by Pastor or Superintendent.

V. THE SUPPLEMENTAL LESSON.*

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS, (especially of the Church service and week-evening prayer-meeting.)

CLOSING SERVICE.

I. SINGING.

II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.

SUPT. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.

SCHOOL. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

III. DISMISSAL.

THE APOSTLES' CREED.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

* Special Lessons in the Church Catechism may here be introduced.

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

THIRD QUARTER: THREE MONTHS WITH DAVID AND THE PSALMS.

NOTES BY THE REV. J. L. HURLBUT, D.D.

B. C. 1034.]

LESSON V. DAVID'S REPENTANCE.

[August 3.]

Psa. 51. 1-19. [Commit to memory verses 9-12.]



1 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me.

4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight; that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.

12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit:

13 Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

14 Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation; and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

15 O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

16 For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt-offering.

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

18 Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zi'ion: build thou the walls of Je-ru-sa-lem.

19 Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt-offering, and whole burnt-offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

General Statement.

In the record of David's prosperity a dark blot appears upon the page in the story of David's sin. He committed two grievous crimes. He robbed an unsuspecting man of his wife, and then to hide his guilt caused the innocent husband to be murdered by the swords of enemies. It is noticeable that the Scripture does not conceal nor gloss over the wickedness of him who had been called in other days "the man after God's own heart," but relates David's sin and his punishment with far more detail than David's conquests. And his crime, great as it seems to our eyes, and even greater to his own, would not have been deemed gross by another sovereign in the oriental world, either in that age, or in any age since. It shows the loftiness of the Bible standard of moral purity, that David received for this sin the bold rebuke of the prophet, and a warning of the woe which was destined to follow it. The crime

had been committed in private, and few knew the guilty secret. But David's repentance was public and before all the nation. In the deep humiliation of his spirit he penned this psalm, which entered into the literature of the Old Testament, was chanted by priests at the services of worship, and has been "the sinner's guide" to repentance and pardon through all the centuries since. In it we note the clearness with which he saw his own sinfulness, and the humiliation of soul with which he confessed it, claiming no extenuation, but taking all its guilt as his own. We observe how earnest was his pleading, not that the penalty might be remitted, but that its stain might be cleansed away from his own consciousness. From David's psalm we may learn how we, like him in our sinful condition, may with him climb the steps of repentance up to the summit of renewed acceptance with God.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verses 1, 2. Mercy.... loving-kindness.... tender mercies. Notice the three words which express the grace of God which was David's only hope for pardon. The first means pity toward one who deserves punishment; the second, the love from which that pity springs; the third emphasizes compassion and shows it to be infinite. (1) *A sinner's only hope is in the love of God.* **Transgressions.... iniquity.... sin.** These are the three words expressing David's guilt; the first meaning the passing over a forbidden line; the second, turning out of the right way; the third, in the original meaning, "to miss an aim;" and all these give pictures of wrong-doing in its various aspects. (2) *None but the penitent knows the truth about sin's misery.* **Blot out.... wash.... cleanse.** These are David's three prayers for himself: the first meaning the erasure of the record against him; the second, literally, "multiply to wash me," wash me again and again, until thoroughly pure; the third, a desire for purity of heart, deeper than of life. (3) *The true penitent is more alarmed for his sinful condition than for the overhanging penalty.*

3. For. This word gives the reason, not why he should be forgiven, but why he asks for forgiveness. **I acknowledge.** "I will know;" expressing a clear internal perception of sin. (4) *The first step toward salvation is to clearly recognize one's self a sinner.* **My transgressions.** Note the plural form; showing that David saw not one, but many sins in his act. **Ever before me.** The guilty consciousness, not the fear of punishment, haunted him constantly.

4. Against thee, thee only. True, he had wronged his fellow-man, and had dishonored his royal estate; but the sin against God cast into shadow every other relation; for in its true essence all sin is against God, and against God only. **That thou mightest be justified.** He

admits that God is just, whatever may be the sentence pronounced against him, and bows his head to submit to it.

5. I was shapen. Born. In iniquity. He recognizes that since birth he has been a sinner; but this is not in extenuation of his guilt, only an aggravation of it. **Did my mother conceive me.** He does not throw the blame upon his parents, and make heredity an excuse for his condition; but confesses to a tainted nature, to an original birth-depravity. (5) *Man belongs to a guilty stock, and grows from a sinful root.*

6. Thou desirest. He now turns from beholding his own depravity to the contemplation of the divine standard of purity. **Truth.** Uprightness, righteousness. **Inward part.** Not only the outward right conduct, but the inward integrity of heart and purpose. **Make me to know wisdom.** God makes us to know wisdom by placing in us reverence for himself, which is the beginning of wisdom.

7. Purge me with hyssop. This was the formal purification of one who had been a leper. Lev. 14. 4-6 David considered himself in God's sight as a leper who needed cleansing. The hyssop was a plant headed like a broom, and used for sprinkling. **Clean.** (6) *He whom God pronounces clean is clean indeed.*

8. Make me. By the assurance of forgiveness, **To hear joy and gladness.** The most joyful sound a sinner can hear is the voice which proclaims him forgiven. **Bones which thou hast broken.** The bones, as the framework of the body, are regarded as crushed by the consciousness of guilt. **May rejoice.** (7) *He who imparts sorrow for sin can alone give the joy of salvation.* Hosea 6. 1.

9. Hide thy face. A prayer that God will not only

forgive, but forget, his sins. So he has promised to do, saying, "Your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more." But God will hide his face from our sins only when we turn our face toward him. **Blot out.** See note on verse 1.

10. Create. The word here used is the strongest in the Hebrew language to express the bringing into being that which was not, (as in Gen. 1. 1.) and is spoken only of God. David seeks for that which is a creation, and which only God can create. **Clean heart.** The heart is the source of character and life; and David's prayer was for what Christ called the new birth. (8) *To change a sinner to a saint is greater and more divine than to speak a word from nothing.* **A right spirit.** "A steadfast spirit;" a purpose which will not be fickle, now serving God and then yielding to sin, but thorough and determined in righteousness. (9) *We need not only a new, but a steadfast, heart in God's cause.*

11. Cast me not away. He realizes, like the prodigal, that he is not fit for the companionship of his Father's house, yet prays not to be turned away. **From thy presence.** The presence of God, which the sinner dreads, is the one longing of the penitent. **Take not thy Holy Spirit.** That divine influence which came upon David at his anointing, (1 Sam. 16. 1.) and which he now fears he may lose, as did Saul, whose misery after its departure David well knew.

12. Restore unto me. For he once had known it, and longs to know it again. **The joy of thy salvation.** (10) *Who that has once felt the joy of sonship in God can ever forget it, wherever he may stray!* **Uphold me with thy free Spirit.** Rather, according to the best scholars, "with a willing spirit," make my spirit willing; referring to David's mind, rather than the divine Spirit.

13. Then will I teach. The original indicates a desire to show to others who have sinned the mercy of God. (11) *None can tell the story of salvation so well as the sinner who has been saved.* **Sinners shall be converted.** Perhaps no Psalm has been a guide to so many from sin to grace as this; so that David's desire has been fulfilled.

14. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness. David feels that Uriah's blood cries for vengeance, and he prays

that the accuser may be silenced by his own forgiveness. **Sing... of thy righteousness.** Of God's righteousness as manifested in the fulfillment of his promises; and of the righteousness which satisfies both justice and mercy in forgiveness.

15. Open thou. Rather, "Thou wilt open." David's lips had been closed by his guilt, but now God will unseal them by his pardon. **Show forth thy praise.** The highest praise is not that for God's greatness and majesty, but for his mercy in salvation; and this new song would David sing.

16. Desirest not sacrifice. A less spiritual mind would have thought that offerings would atone for sin; but David sees that the external rite availed nothing without the inward contrition. **Delightest not in burnt-offering.** The offering of a slain beast would have value only so far as it represented the consecration of a living heart to God.

17. Sacrifices of God. Those sacrifices which are acceptable to God. **A broken spirit.** A heart truly penitent for its sins and humbly seeking God. **Thou wilt not despise.** God never refuses the prayer of one who is conscious of sin and seeks for mercy. (12) *When we turn toward God, God turns toward us.*

18. Do good... unto Zion. Zion was the stronghold of his realm, his new capital, and the place where the ark of God was resting. David prays that his sin may not stop the progress of God's kingdom. **Build thou the walls.** David was just completing the walls of the city when his sin was committed. As another crime caused the death of seventy thousand people, David feared lest this might bring some reverse upon Israel. (13) *The sins of God's people are the greatest hindrances to God's cause.*

19. Then shalt thou be pleased. While sacrifices from an unforgiven sinner were worth nothing, God would accept those offered from the gratitude of a redeemed spirit would be acceptable. **Sacrifices of righteousness.** Sacrifices to express gratitude for righteousness regained. **Whole burnt-offering.** An offering wholly consumed, showing the consecration of the worshiper. **Bullocks.** The largest and most expensive kind of sacrifices.

HOME READINGS.

- M.* David's repentance. Psa. 51. 1-19.
Tu. David's sin. 2 Sam. 11. 1-13.
W. Uriah slain. 2 Sam. 11. 14-25.
Th. David reproved by Nathan. 2 Sam. 12. 1-13.
F. David's confession. 2 Sam. 12. 14-23.
S. The source of cleansing. 1 John 1. 1-10.
S. The blessedness of forgiveness. Psa. 32. 1-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.

My sin is ever before me. Psa. 51. 3.

LESSON HYMN. L. M.

Hymnal, No. 391.

Show pity, Lord, O Lord, forgive;
 Let a repenting rebel live;
 Are not thy mercies large and free?
 May not a sinner trust in thee?
 O wash my soul from every sin,
 And make my guilty conscience clean;
 Here on my heart the burden lies,
 And past offenses pain my eyes.
 Yet save a trembling sinner, Lord,
 Whose hope, still hovering round thy word,
 Would light on some sweet promise there,
 Some sure support against despair.

TIME.—B. C. 1034.

CONNECTING LINK.—David's sin with Bathsheba. 2 Sam. 11. 1-27.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—True repentance.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

- 1. A Confession, v. 1-5.**
 What was David's sin, referred to in this Psalm?
 Why did he say that it was against God and God only?
 What showed the sincerity of his repentance?
 What characteristics of a true confession are here shown?

To what traits in the divine nature did David appeal in his prayer?

2. A Supplication, v. 6-19.

- For what six mercies did David pray?
 What kind of cleansing did he desire?
 What was his prayer concerning his iniquities?
 What does God promise in Isa. 43. 25?
 What was David's prayer for God's Spirit?
 How is his prayer illustrated by Eph. 4. 30?
 What was David's vow to God if forgiven?
 What does he name as the sacrifices acceptable to God?
 What was his prayer for Jerusalem?

Practical Teachings.

Where in this lesson do we find—

1. The characteristics of a sincere repentance?
2. The elements of a true prayer for mercy?
3. The vows of a forgiven sinner?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. A Confession, v. 1-5.

- What is the prayer of the penitent king?
 To what divine attributes does he appeal?
 What has God declared of himself in Num. 14. 18?
 What must be the plea of every sinful heart?
 How may this cleansing be wrought? 1 John 1. 7.
 What follows the cry for a clean heart?
 Whom has the sinner offended?
 To whom should confession, then, be made?
 What encouragement have we for the confession of sin? 1 John 1. 9.

2. A Supplication, v. 6-19.

- For what change did David pray?
 What has God promised to the penitent? Ezek. 36. 26.
 What presence and guidance are here sought?
 To whom has the Lord promised his Spirit? Luke 11. 13.
 What service does the psalmist promise?

What is the duty of every converted soul toward others?

What will follow faithful witnessing?

What should be the language of the Christian? **Psa.**

35. 28. What encouragement have the broken-hearted? **Psa.**

34. 18. What sacrifice is pleasing to God?

Have you offered this sacrifice?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we shown—

1. The prayer of the penitent?
2. The confession of the contrite?
3. The acceptable sacrifice?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

For what does David plead? **For God's mercy.**

What confession does he make? [Repeat **GOLDEN**

TEXT.]

Against whom had David sinned? **Against God.**

Who only can judge sin? **God.**

What does God look upon? **The heart.**

What did David want? **A clean heart and a right spirit.**

What did David ask of God? **To be washed and made pure.**

For what did he pray? **That the Holy Spirit might not be taken from him.**

What promise did he make? **To teach sinners the way of the Lord.**

What always follows true repentance? **God's pardon.**

What does God love? **A broken and contrite heart.**

What is better than sacrifice? **A humble, obedient spirit.**

What does David ask God to prosper? **The Church of Zion.**

When are sacrifices acceptable to God? **When offered with repentant hearts.**

What only can give us joy? **God's forgiveness of our sins.**

Words with Little People.

When you have sinned—Do not hide it. Do not deny it. Do not try to excuse it. Confess it humbly. Sorrow over it heartily. And with God's help *never do it again*. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. What is David's prayer? **"Have mercy upon me, O God."**

2. What does David ask of God? **"Cleanse me from my sin."**

3. What does God desire? **"Truth in the inward parts."**

4. What are the sacrifices of God? **A broken spirit.**

5. What does God not despise? **A broken and a contrite heart.**

TEXTS AT CHURCH.

Morning Text.....

Evening Text.....

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

The Upward Steps of a Sinner.

I. PENITENCE.

I acknowledge....transgression. v. 3.

"I acknowledged my sin." **Psa.** 32. 5.

"Confess our sins....forgive us." **1 John** 1. 9.

II. PRAYER.

Blot out my transgressions. v. 1.

"Let us return unto the Lord." **Hosea** 6. 1.

"Call ye upon him....near." **Isa.** 55. 6.

III. PARDON.

Hide thy face from my sins. v. 9.

"Redemption....forgiveness of sins." **Col.** 1. 14.

"Will not remember thy sins." **Isa.** 43. 25.

IV. PURITY.

Create in me a clean heart. v. 10.

"Ye shall be clean." **Ezek.** 36. 25

"Ye are washed....sanctified." **1 Cor.** 6. 11.

V. PRAISE.

Open thou my lips. v. 15.

"A new song....even praise." **Psa.** 40. 3.

"Hast redeemed us to God." **Rev.** 5. 9.

VI. PROMISE.

The sacrifices of righteousness. v. 19.

"I will pay my vows." **Psa.** 116. 14.

"Will pay that I have vowed." **Jonah** 2. 9.

ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.

The Traits of True Penitence.

1. The true penitent hopes for mercy, not in his own righteousness, but only in the loving-kindness of God. v. 1.

2. The true penitent is overwhelmed with the consciousness of sin, and sees his guilt in all its fullness. v. 1-3.

3. The true penitent seeks for cleansing from sin, rather than for relief from punishment. v. 2, 3.

4. The true penitent realizes that his sin is in relation to God, and submits to the divine justice in its sentence. v. 4.

5. The true penitent realizes at once the height of the divine standard, and the depth of his own innate depravity. v. 5, 6.

6. The true penitent seeks entire cleansing, a complete pardon, and a renewal of the divine presence. v. 7-12.

7. The true penitent is ready to tell the story of salvation, and lead other sinners to repentance. v. 13.

An English Teacher's Notes on the Lessons.

BY SARAH GERALDINA STOCK.

I HOPE there are few who ever come to a Sunday-school for instruction who would not be sorry to see a fellow-creature in trouble; whose interest would not be in some measure roused for such a one, who would not care to ask what is the matter, and whether the trouble can be removed. In the passage for to-day we get the sight of a man in the deepest distress. And this man is none other than King David, of whose glory and prosperity we have so lately been reading. We have here his own account of his trouble. Let us look closely at this account, that we may see both the reason of the trouble, and the quarter from which he looked for deliverance:

1. *The reason of his trouble.*

In many of David's Psalms we read of wars and enemies and oppressors and dangers; of nets and snares laid for him; of friends forsaking and foes mocking. But there is nothing of this sort here—no outside trouble is weighing him down. It is something inside, something of his own: "my transgressions;" "mine iniquity;" "my sin." It is a trouble always with him, and which he cannot forget: "ever before me." Ver. 3.

Why is this? You may notice men doing wrong day after day, but it does not seem to trouble them. They do not look at all miserable. Their thoughts are full of something else. Their business, their money, their pleasure, is "ever before" them, not their sin. Why was it so different with David? There were two things that made the difference:

(1.) In the old English story of King Alfred and the cakes, the peasant's wife feels no compunction for her abuse of the supposed poor wanderer who had unwittingly allowed her cakes to burn. Her conscience in no way smites her for her ill-temper and want of courtesy, until she finds out whom she has offended. The discovery that it is the king of the land quite alters the case, and fills her at once with horror and distress. King David saw that he had sinned, not merely against his own subjects, but against his God: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned." This was what made the matter so terrible. God had marked the sin. God was displeased at it.

(2.) But it was not the outward act of wickedness only that God marked. In the collection of tales on the beatitudes, called the "Golden Ladder," there is a story of a school-girl, Annie, who commits some act of petty selfishness. She is somewhat distressed at the thought of what she had done, but persists in saying, "It was not like me," looking upon it as an isolated act, and not the natural produce of an evil heart. In vain does the teacher try to show Annie that it is like her, and that she needs her heart cleansed and renewed; she is too proud to acknowledge it. Not so David. "Behold," he says, "I was shapen in iniquity." It was out of his natural, corrupt heart that the evil had sprung, and not the one act merely, but the wickedness of the heart was abominable in the sight of Him who desired "truth in the inward parts."

No wonder that, seeing all this, David was miserable, that the terrible plague of his heart was "ever before him," giving him no rest. But now look at,

2. *The quarter from which he hoped for relief.*

Only a short time ago I had a sad and distressing case laid before me in a letter. The writer imagined I was a suitable person to apply to for help, and that I should be able to give it. But it was a mistake. I was obliged to reply that the matter was entirely out of my province and beyond my power. In order not to be disappointed of what we desire, we should seek for it in the right quarter—in that which corresponds to the need.

Now what was David's need? He wanted pardon, (vers. 1, 9,) cleansing, (vers. 2, 7, 14,) renewal,

(ver. 10,) and restoration to all that he had lost. Vers. 8, 11, 12, 15.

Whose province was it to grant these? It is of no use to ask one person to forgive an offense committed against another. And if the offense be against the law of a country, pardon can only be granted by the administrators of that law. David's sin being against God, God alone could pardon it. It was his province. To seek pardon anywhere else would have brought only disappointment.

In whose power was it to grant these? Among men it does not always follow that the thing which is in a man's province is also in his power. It is a mother's province to watch over her child, but failing health sometimes renders this impossible. It is a doctor's province to mitigate pain and suffering, yet there are cases in which he can do nothing. But God has not only the province, but the power, to forgive, cleanse, renew, restore. He has provided for the "blotting out" of sin by the cross, (ver. 9; Col. 2. 14,) for "cleansing" from all sin by the blood. Ver. 7; Lev. 14. 6, 7; Heb. 9. 19. He alone, the Creator, can renew the heart, (ver. 10; 2 Cor. 5. 17,) and give that "joy and gladness" which is the fruit of pardon and restoration to his presence. Rom. 5. 11; Psa. 16. 11.

Did David seek all this in vain? His confident and glad purpose to tell others of the God who had been so good to him, (vers. 13-15,) as well as the form of the petition, (vers. 7, 8,) (believed, according to the right rendering, to be: "Thou shalt purge," "Thou shalt make,") shows that he was not disappointed. Happy those who have his experience!

And what of the two concluding verses of this psalm? They would appear to have been added by another writer at a later date, and therefore do not properly come within our subject. But the pardoned and restored will, according to the prayer in ver. 18, seek and desire the good of God's people, and will, as in ver. 19, seek to offer themselves, body, soul, and spirit, as "whole burnt offerings," upon the altar of their Lord. Rom. 12. 1.

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Tell the class carefully about David's sin, Nathan's parable, etc., as the events leading to this psalm.... Show that David not only sinned, but repented of his sin.... I. Notice in this psalm David's view of a sinner's condition, with the words describing it—*transgression, iniquity, sin, evil, blood-guiltiness*. Let the class find these words, and the teacher explain them.... II. Show what David desired, and explain the words, as before: 1.) "Blot out;" 2.) "Wash;" 3.) "Cleanse;" 4.) "Hide;" 5.) "Create," etc.... III. Show the privileges of a penitent as here presented.... IV. Show the vows of a penitent as here made.... Do not fail to present in this lesson the way of salvation.... **ILLUSTRATION.** An ancient Persian song says: "If the heavens were a bow, the earth its string, the lightning the arrow, and you were its target, what would you do?"

And the next verse answers, "I would seek the bosom of the archer!" Man's only hope of mercy is in the loving-kindness of God.

References. FOSTER'S CYCLOPEDIA OF ILLUSTRATIONS: Ver. 1: 3906, 3901. Ver. 1-3: 927, 928, 9147. Ver. 5: Poetical, 795; Prose, 4283, 4289. Ver. 6: 2608. Ver. 7: 433, 7934; Poetical, 2280. Ver. 8: 12306, Ver. 9: 229. Ver. 10: 2850, 2967. Ver. 11: 7562. Ver. 12: 253. Ver. 13: 2978. Ver. 15: 1158. Ver. 17: Poetical, 517; Prose, 1046, 10936. FREEMAN'S HAND-BOOK. Ver. 7: Use of hyssop, 437. Ver. 19: The burnt-offering, 151.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

What is it we hear—"Nathan would like to see King David?" He is admitted, and there stands the prophet before the king's throne and tells the pathetic story of the little ewe lamb that a rich man took from a poor man, and sparing his own flock, he served up the poor man's pet to satisfy a hungry guest. Contemptible to crowd the poor man to the wall and thereby crush the little ewe lamb! How David's face flames with anger! Wretch! Where is that oppressor of the humble? "Let him die," is David's thought. But stay your indignant speech, David! Nathan is looking at you. What a sharp-pointed, far-penetrating look! What does he mean? Then comes Nathan's terrible charge: "Thou—art—the—man!" The prophet is gone now. David is left in shame and sorrow. Soon after, there is a sick baby in the house, David's little ewe lamb is dying. There is a royal but guilty father prostrated before God. He puts away food. He will not leave the place. He is draped with sackcloth? It is not as black as his sin. He is sorry though. The ashes upon him may be cold, but his tears are hot. He is alone, bowed and in deep sorrow, begging God for the life of his little ewe lamb. It may have been then he cried out, "Have mercy—upon—me, O God!" Hear him: "upon me!" Ah, David, guilt is coming home, striking to the heart! How his guilt rolls up! It is a mountain just above him that cannot be hidden: "My sin is ever before me." How evil an heart to roll up such a mountain of guilt! How far back the mischief extends as if a birth-misfortune: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity." There must be deep root-work to reach a trouble going so far back and down. "Create—in me—a clean heart, O God," he sobs. But, David, you have not mentioned your sin yet? Is it not agreeable? Wont the blood on the ground stay covered, and does it seem to come out and stare at you? "De-liv-er me from blood guiltiness, O God!" There it is! And no sacrifice to offer but a broken heart? Take that to God, a broken and contrite heart, David. After the darkness of hours of guilty self-reproach what wonder if there comes a hope—like the morning light staining all the eastern sky with a crimson flush—that God hears and forgives?

Primary and Intermediate.

BY M. V. M.

LESSON THOUGHT. *Sin and its Cure.* Object Lesson. A worm-eaten flower or leaf, or an apple decayed at the core, may be used to illustrate the way sin works in the soul.

SIN AND SORROW.

Question about David's life, bringing vividly before the children his great power and riches, and the favor God had showed him. Tell the story of his sin, the desire to please himself, no matter what happened to others, which led to the death of Uriah. Show that it

is the same sin in the heart of a child which makes him crowd another out of his place, or take away his apple, and that God is displeased with it, as he was with David's sin. Make a heart on the board with something to represent a worm inside, and teach that this is the worm of selfishness which eats the life out of the soul. Tell of the prophet's visit to David to show him his sin and God's displeasure, and how God punished David by taking away his dear little boy. It was because God loved David that he punished him for his sin, and David shows us how we should behave when we have sinned and have been shown our sin. He was sorry, and went right to God to ask forgiveness. Read parts of the lesson to show how he prayed.

SIN AND ITS CURE.

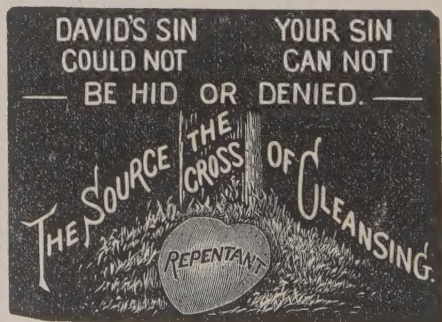


Tell story of a little boy who, when he has done wrong, says, "I don't want to hear any thing about it!" David had to hear, and then confess, and then God could forgive him. Pin up white paper and make a charcoal mark upon it. Sin makes a black spot upon the

soul which no human hand can rub off. Read verse 7. David knew that he could not wash away his sin, and that none of his friends could do it for him. Tell what the laver was used for in old times, and tell that it was a picture of the washing that a soul needs. If class is familiar with it sing, just here, "What can wash away my stain?" and teach that to get our sins washed away we must pray, as David did, for the Holy Spirit to show us where we are wrong, and we must believe that Jesus' blood has power to wash away sin. Teach that any sin is a sin against God, and that every day we need to have our sins washed away, just as every day we need to have the soil of this world washed away.

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



The lesson to be taught by means of this illustration is that sin cannot be hid from God. It cannot be denied. There is but one source of cleansing, and that is to bring a repentant heart to the cross where Jesus suffered and died, and plead that through his blood it may be made clean.

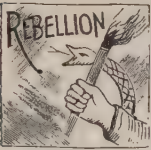
SUGGESTIONS FOR OTHER BLACKBOARD DESIGNS. I. The cleansing fountain. II. Two hearts, one filled with the words "Sin" and "Sorrow," the other with the words "Joy" and "Peace." III. An altar, over it the words, "Thou desirest not sacrifice." A heart, over it the words, "A contrite heart thou wilt not despise."

B. C. 1023.]

LESSON VI. ABSALOM'S REBELLION.

[August 10.]

2 Sam. 15. 1-14. [Commit to memory verses 4-6.]



1 And it came to pass after this, that Ab'sa-lom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him.

2 And Ab'sa-lom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Ab'sa-lom called unto him, and said,

Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Is'ra-el.

3 And Ab'sa-lom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but *there is no man deputed* of the king to hear thee.

4 Ab'sa-lom said moreover, O that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!

5 And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him and kissed him.

6 And on this manner did Ab'sa-lom to all Is'ra-el that came to the king for judgment: so Ab'sa-lom stole the hearts of the men of Is'ra-el.

7 And it came to pass after forty years, that Ab'sa-lom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay

my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in He'-bron.

8 For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Ge'shur in Syr'i-a, saying, If the LORD shall bring me again indeed to Je-ru'sa-lem, then I will serve the LORD.

9 And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to He'-bron.

10 But Ab'sa-lom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Is'ra-el, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Ab'sa-lom reigneth in He'-bron.

11 And with Ab'sa-lom went two hundred men out of Je-ru'sa-lem, that were called; and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not any thing.

12 And Ab'sa-lom sent for A-hith'o-phiel the Gi'lo-nite, Da'vid's counselor, from his city, even from Gi'loh, while he offered sacrifices: and the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Ab'sa-lom.

13 And there came a messenger to Da'vid, saying, The hearts of the men of Is'ra-el are after Ab'sa-lom.

14 And Da'vid said unto all his servants that were with him at Je-ru'sa-lem, Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not else escape from Ab'sa-lom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword.

General Statement.

While the throne of David seemed to be most secure, victorious over its foreign foes, and prosperous in all its relations; while the walls of Zion were rising, and wealth was pouring into its gates, suddenly it tottered to its very foundations, as if an earthquake had risen beneath it. David's sin brought forth its result even though it had been forgiven. There were causes for discontent in the realm. The powerful tribe of Judah was displeased because it had lost the capital, and was not suffered to rule the whole land. The king no longer appeared at the head of his army, arousing the enthusiasm of his people, but was shut up in the palace, surrounded by women and foreign guards, while his seat at the gate was unoccupied, and his judicial duties were left undone. The crimes of Joab and the intrigues of the court had given offense, the foreign wars led to increased taxes, and throughout the land there spread a restless desire for a change in the government. This discontent was artfully fomented by Absalom, who had returned from exile, and lived in royal state at Jerusalem. By his flatteries the hearts of the people were won, and the seed was scattered throughout Israel for a harvest of treason and rebellion. Every-where arose an "Absalom party," composed of the worldly-minded, the godless, and the idolatrous elements of the popula-

tion. The secret was closely kept, and David in his palace knew not that his throne was undermined. At last the hour has come. Absalom comes into the presence of the king, and with a suspicious show of piety asks leave to go to Hebron to hold a sacrificial feast. The father is only too glad to see in his wayward son the tokens of repentance, and willingly grants his request. Two hundred nobles of the realm accompany the young prince, supposing that they are going to a religious service, ignorant that they are aiding a rebellion. At the altar in Hebron he summons Ahithophel, the Talleyrand of his time, and gains his powerful influence and his astute counsels. Suddenly the trumpet is sounded; hill-top after hill-top catches the sound, and one voice seems to arise from all the land, "Absalom is king!" The news of the revolt is borne to David that all Israel has forsaken him, and gone after his son. The sorrow-smitten father and king sees in it the hand of God, and bows to the divine judgment. He leaves his palace and his capital, and a sorrowful procession wends its way across the Kedron, and over the Mount of Olives, nor pauses until it has reached the highlands of Gilead, and the sanctuary of Mahanaim. There David rests, and prepares to gather his friends to fight for his crown.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 1. It came to pass. As the fulfillment of Nathan's prophecy, Chap. 12. 10, 11. **After this.** After Absalom's return from Geshur, and his apparent reconciliation with David. **Absalom.** He was David's son by Maachah, the daughter of Talmi, a prince who reigned over the little province of Geshur, north-east of Palestine. He was trained by a heathen mother, which may account for some traits in his character. The handsomest youth in Israel, and of princely origin, he was flattered by all around him, and grew up with an ungovernable temper, a boundless ambition, and an utter lack of moral principle. If his conspiracy had succeeded Israel would have fallen from its high place as the people of God to the level of the heathen nations around. **Prepared him chariots.** He set up a semi-royal state, as if to assert his claim as heir to the throne; and to make more gracious his flatteries to the common people. **Horses.** This is the first mention of horses among the Israelites. They had been recently introduced from Egypt, and were used exclusively by princes. **Fifty men.** Nobles in the East still have footmen running beside and in front of their chariots. (1) *Pride goes before a fall, and ambition often overleaps itself.*

2. Rose up early. Public business in the East is transacted early, before the heat of the day. **The way of the gate.** The street leading to the palace, at the door of which the king was wont to sit to administer justice. **A controversy.** Rather, "a suit at law." Such persons as failed in gaining attention to their suits would naturally be discontented with the government, and fitting instruments for conspiracy.

Came to the king. As in the East the king gives personal hearing to complaints, generally at the palace door. David had failed to attend to this duty, from his foreign wars, his buildings, his advancing years, and perhaps a tendency to a pleasure-loving life. **Absalom called.** Showing a condescension and an apparent interest, to curry favor with the people. **Of one of the tribes.** Naming the particular tribe in his answer.

3. Absalom said. After inquiring into his case, and hearing his story. **Thy matters are good.** By flattering each man with a favorable opinion, he would excite his feelings against King David, and win regard for himself. **There is no man deputed.** Absalom insinuates that the king was neglecting his duty, and failing to appoint a substitute. (2) *Criticism is always easier than administration.*

4. O that I were made judge. Absalom made his interest in the public welfare contrast with David's apparent neglect. **Would do him justice.** It is always easier to promise justice than to award it; and when in his brief hour of success Absalom held the reins of power, he showed a pitiful lack of sense and judgment.

5, 6. When any man. Of the ordinary rank of common people. **To do him obeisance.** Showing him the homage due to a king's son. **Put forth his hand.** Staying his act of reverence, clasping his hand, and kissing him as an equal and friend. **Stole the hearts.** Gained the love of the people by deceit and flattery. Well did Socrates say, "The most dangerous of tame beasts is the flatterer!" (3) *Note how easily*

the currents of popular opinion are set in motion.
(4) Note, too, that the voice of the people is not always the voice of God.

7. It came to pass. As the result of these flatteries, acting upon a discontented people, and in a time of peculiar opportunity. **After forty years.** The text here is evidently wrong, and probably should read *four years*, with Josephus and some of the ancient versions. The four years are to be reckoned from Absalom's return from exile. **Absalom said to the king.** The conspiracy was now ripe; for Absalom's agents were in every part of the kingdom, and there was danger of discovery in longer delay. **Let me go and pay my vow.** He knew the piety of his father, and knew, too, that nothing would please him more than an appearance of religion in his son; so he adds to his crimes the cloak of hypocrisy. **Vowed unto the Lord.** It is not likely that Absalom had ever made any such vow, as his entire record is against the supposition. (5) *Notice how one sin leads to another and a greater.* **In Hebron.** This was Absalom's birthplace, and had been the capital of Judah before the conquest of Jerusalem. It doubtless contained many who were disaffected at the removal of the court, and would therefore be a promising center of conspiracy.

8. Thy servant vowed. A vow was generally to offer some sacrifices, which were attended with a feast. **Geshur in Syria.** A small district north of Bashan, east of the Jordan, and probably the region now called *El Ledjah*. Here Absalom had remained for three years after his murder of Amnon. **Then I will serve the Lord.** By the offering of a special sacrifice and service of worship.

9. The king said. That no suspicion of the plot had reached David may be accounted for by the fact that he was living in a palace, apart from the people, and, conscious of his own integrity, did not think evil of his own son. **Go in peace.** David was pleased to see the signs of piety in his son, and was by his nature inclined to hope for the best in him. **Went to Hebron.** A city among the mountains of Judah, twenty miles south of Jerusalem, and the burial-place of the patriarchs.

10. Absalom sent spies. These men were to sound the feelings of the people, and gather in every place a following for Absalom's cause. **The sound of the trumpet.** Trumpeters were stationed upon the hills at convenient intervals for announcement throughout the country. **Absalom reigneth in Hebron.** This shows that Absalom's chief support was in the tribe of Judah, which was jealous of its independence and influence, and dissatisfied with the equality of the tribes under David, as well as with the loss of the capital. Even when the rebellion was over, Judah was slow in showing loyalty to David. 2 Sam. 19. 11.

HOME READINGS.

- M.* Absalom's rebellion. 2 Sam. 15. 1-14.
Tu. Absalom's return. 2 Sam. 14. 21-33.
W. David's flight. 2 Sam. 15. 15-23.
Th. Conspiracy against Paul. Acts 23. 12-22.
F. The duty of children. Eph. 6. 1-10.
S. Hushai sent back. 2 Sam. 15. 30-37.
S. The prayer of distress. Psa. 55. 1-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. Exod. 20. 12.

LESSON HYMN. S. M.

Hymnal, No. 434.

I was a wandering sheep,
I did not love the fold,
I did not love my Shepherd's voice,
I would not be controlled;
I was a wayward child,
I did not love my home,
I did not love my Father's voice,
I loved afar to roam.
The Shepherd sought his sheep,
The Father sought his child;
He followed me o'er vale and hill,
O'er deserts waste and wild:
He found me nigh to death,
Famished, and faint, and lone;
He bound me with the bands of love,
He saved the wandering one.

11. Went two hundred men. Nobles of the court, invited to the feast at Hebron. **That were called.** Their presence with Absalom would give the appearance of a large and powerful support to his cause; they might be led to give it their adherence when surrounded by Absalom's friends; or they might be held as prisoners if they resolutely opposed him. **Went in their simplicity.** They were ignorant of the plot, but supposed that they were going to a sacrificial feast.

12. Sent for Ahithophel. He was one of the most shrewd men of the time, and his advice on public affairs was regarded as that "of an oracle of God." 2 Sam. 16. 23. Some have found a reason for his joining the conspiracy in the fact that Bathsheba, who had been wronged by David, was his granddaughter. 2 Sam. 11. 3; 23. 34. Yet David had made her his queen, she was now all-powerful in the palace, and her son was recognized as the heir of the throne; so that Ahithophel was conspiring against his own family. He may have joined Absalom's party merely because he thought it would succeed, and his own power increased with it. **The Gileadite.** A native of Gilead, in southern Judah. **David's counselor.** The trusted adviser of the king. **While he offered sacrifices.** Absalom, about to offer sacrifice, sent for Ahithophel, to gain his presence, influence, and counsel. **The conspiracy was strong.** Sanctioned by the presence of the nobles, strengthened by the influence of Ahithophel, and the military power of Amasa, backed by the powerful tribe of Judah, and heralded through all the land, the rebellion sprung like magic into prominence, and seemed to represent the voice of all Israel. **Increased continually.** Popular movements rise and fall with great suddenness in the Orient, as witness the progress of the so-called False Prophet in Soudan.

13. A messenger to David. Bringing to the unsuspecting king and father the first news of the conspiracy. **The hearts of the men of Israel.** Meaning here the desires and the will. **After Absalom.** In accounting for David's sudden flight we must remember that he heard of the movement only when it was a success; and also he recognized in it the fulfillment of prophecy and the hand of the Lord.

14. Let us flee. Various influences and motives united to cause David's sudden flight: his ignorance of the extent of the conspiracy; his sudden alarm paralyzing the will; his desire to save the city from the terrors of a siege; the wish to gain time to organize his friends; and a submission to what seemed to be God's will. **Smite the city.** The king, ever thoughtful of others, would spare his capital from danger; and the result showed that his retirement before the storm was the wisest policy. He took refuge at Mahanaim, east of Jordan.

TIME.—B. C. 1023.

PLACES.—Jerusalem and Hebron.

CONNECTING LINKS.—1. The sin of Amnon. 2 Sam. 13. 1-22. 2. Banishment of Absalom for the murder of his brother, Amnon. 2 Sam. 13. 23-39. 3. Return of Absalom through the influence of Joab. 2 Sam. 14. 1-33.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION—Filial reverence.

Monthly Missionary Meeting.—Topics: 1. Preparing the way of the Lord. Isa. 40. 3. 2. Missions in Africa.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

- 1. A False Prince, v. 1-6.**
What motives led Absalom to purpose a rebellion?
What measures did he take to promote it?
How did he steal the hearts of the people?
What spirit did he show toward the government?
What is our duty toward the constituted authorities? Rom. 13. 1.
- 2. A Lying Son, v. 7-9.**
What is the command in the GOLDEN TEXT?
How did Absalom violate this?
How did he also show hypocrisy?
How should we worship God? John 4. 24.
- 3. A Foul Conspiracy, v. 10-14.**
What was the plan of the conspiracy?
Where was it put into action?
Who was one of its strongest helpers, and what afterward became of him? 2 Sam. 17. 23.
What contributed to the success of the conspiracy?
How did David act, and why?

Practical Teachings.

Where does this lesson illustrate—

1. The sin of flattery?
2. The sin of impiety?
3. The sin of hypocrisy?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.**1. A False Prince, v. 1-6.**

- What royal escort did the king's son gather?
- What place of honor did he assume?
- Whose favor did he court?
- What did he suggest to them?
- How, besides, did he court favor?
- What did he accomplish by this course?
- Whom did he wrong by it?

2. A Lying Son, v. 7-9.

- What request did Absalom make of his father?
 - What false statement did he make?
 - How did the king treat his request?
 - What does the wise man say concerning falsehood?
- Prov. 12, 22.

3. A Foul Conspiracy, v. 10-14.

- What treachery did Absalom intend?
- How did he make it known?
- Who went with him to Hebron?
- What royal officer joined the conspiracy?
- What message came to the king?
- What did David propose to his friends?
- What did he fear?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where are we shown in this lesson—

1. That wicked ambition leads to crime?
2. That pride and ingratitude in a child are open gates to rebellion?
3. That a bad son makes a sad home?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What did Absalom prepare for himself? **Horses and chariots and fifty men.**

Why did he do this? **To attract the attention of the people.**

What was a great luxury in those days? **Horses; only kings possessed them.**

Where did Absalom place himself? **Beside the road to the gate.**

Why did he do this? **To meet the people going to the king.**

What did the king hold by the gate early in the morning? **A sort of court, to grant judgments.**

How did Absalom gain the hearts of the people? **By flattery and false sympathy.**

What did Absalom pretend to David? **That he wanted to go to Hebron to keep his vow.**

What was his real object? **To call the people together, and make himself king.**

What did David say to him? **"Go in peace."**

How many men did Absalom take with him out of Jerusalem? **Two hundred.**

For whom did Absalom send to help him? **Ahithophel, David's counselor.**

What did Absalom send throughout the tribes of Israel? **Spies, to help his cause.**

How were the people to know when Absalom was proclaimed king? **When the trumpets sounded.**

Who brought the bad news to David? **A messenger.**

What did David do? **He fled from Jerusalem.**

Words with Little People.

Absalom—Absalom wanted to be king, so he deceived the people. He rebelled against his father. He sinned against God.

Yourself—Do you like your own way? Would you like to do just as you please? If you cannot obey your parents, how will you obey God?

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. What did Absalom do? **"Stood beside the way of the gate."**

2. What did he say to those who came to the king for judgment? **"O that I were made judge!"**

3. What was the effect of this? **He stole the hearts of Israel.**

4. Where was the rallying point of Absalom's rebellion? **At Hebron.**

5. What did David do when he heard that Absalom had rebelled? **He fled.**

TEXTS AT CHURCH.

Morning Text......

Evening Text......

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.**The Fast Young Man.****I. HIS VANITY.**

Chariots....horses....men. v. 1.

"Much praised....for his beauty." 2 Sam. 14. 25.

"Man looketh....outward appearance." 1 Sam. 16. 7.

II. HIS AMBITION.

O that I were made judge! v. 4.

"Lay not wait, O wicked man." Prov. 24. 15, 16.

"Greatest among you....servant." Matt. 23. 11.

III. HIS INSINCERITY.

Put forth his hand....kissed him. v. 5.

"By....fair speeches deceive." Rom. 16. 18.

"Flattereth....spreadeth a net." Prov. 29. 5.

IV. HIS FILIAL IMPIETY.

Absalom said unto the king. v. 7.

"Honor thy father." Exod. 20. 12.

"The eye that mocketh." Prov. 30. 17.

V. HIS HYPOCRISY.

I will serve the Lord. v. 8.

"Sacrifice....wicked....abomination." Prov. 21. 27.

"Hypocrites....whited sepulchers." Matt. 23. 27.

VI. HIS TREACHERY.

Sent spies throughout....tribes. v. 10.

"Mine own....friend....against me." Psa. 41. 9.

"Many rise up against me." Psa. 3. 1.

ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.**Thoughts upon Absalom's History.**

1. Absalom's history shows the danger from a godless mother, and from worldly surroundings in childhood; his mother was a heathen princess, and his home was a palace.

2. Absalom's history shows the evil from a lack of parental control; had David fulfilled a father's duty, his son's career might have been different.

3. Absalom's history shows the evil resulting from ungoverned passions, and a low standard of character.

4. Absalom's history shows how easily currents of popular opinion are formed, and how unjust they may be.

5. Absalom's history shows how base is that ambition which seeks power for its own sake, and not as a sacred trust for the good of men.

6. Absalom's history shows the wickedness of employing religion as a cloak for baseness and treachery.

English Teacher's Notes.

THERE are cities, such as Lisbon and Constantinople, which, when viewed from the sea, present the most enchanting appearance, and with their terraces, fine buildings, and luxuriant groves, standing out in the clear atmosphere, with the bright blue encircling them above and beneath, and the sun lighting them

up with a golden glory, look like a glimpse of fairy-land. But when the traveler disembarks and actually enters the city, the illusion is utterly dispelled. Not that the sun is less bright, or that the blue sky fades, but that they shed their radiance upon filthy streets and unsightliness of all kinds. As attractive as was the first view, so repellent is the reality. We shall find as striking a contrast in the figure brought before us in the passage for to-day.

We know the dark reality of Absalom's character so well, from his sad story, that we are apt to overlook the fascinating exterior he presented to the people of Israel. The only one of David's sons whose mother was a king's daughter, we may well believe that there was something specially high and royal in his demeanor, while in all Israel there was none who equaled him in beauty. Besides this, he dazzled the eyes of a show-loving people by the splendor of his retinue. A little haughtiness is often pardoned in persons of high rank and prepossessing exterior, but in Absalom there was nothing of the kind to be discovered. It is a striking picture that the historian has drawn for us. We see the young prince rising early and hastening to the open space by the city gate where justice was wont to be administered. One applicant arrives after another, each with some fresh tale of trouble and wrong. But (whether kept away by infirmity or neglect, we do not know) the king is not there to hear the causes. He has not even appointed a responsible officer in his place. There is no proper person to hear complaints or see wrongs righted. But as each man turns away disappointed, the handsome young prince accosts him, asks his name and business, and shows the greatest interest in his cause. Look at Absalom's words, (vers. 3, 4): what sympathy! what noble aspirations! Look at his manners: he rejects the homage of the grateful suppliant, and greets him as an equal. Beautiful in his person, magnificent in his surroundings, noble in his bearing, courteous in his manners, full of kindly speech and high sentiment, it is no wonder that men's hearts were won to him.

And, further, he made a profession of sincere piety. He must needs go to Hebron to perform a vow—to offer in his birthplace a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Lord.

If we could have gone through the cities of Israel at that time, we should probably have found the praises of Absalom on every body's lips: "Just the sort of king we want," "A true friend of the people," would have been their judgment concerning him.

But a little later on, how different would matters have been! We should then have found the people ashamed of their former admiration of him, and the ready confidence they had reposed in him, and wishing King David back again at Jerusalem. Chap. 19, 9, 10. And instead of his memory being held in any esteem, it is, on the contrary, loathed and despised by his nation to this day, for the black reality which lay under the fair and promising exterior.

There was, however, one little thing which ought

to have warned men in time against Absalom. What did he say about his father to the complainants at the "gate?" "There is no man appointed of the king to hear thee." He shrank not from speaking ill of his father to any who came.

There is no greater or better test of the character and life of boys or girls than this: the way in which they act toward their parents. A boy may be clever, bright, apt in business, industrious; but if he disobeys his parents he will probably disappoint others too. There is a story of a gentleman seeking for his errand boy "a boy who obeyed his mother." A girl may seem amiable and attractive, but if she neglects her father and mother she is not to be relied on.

There are two lessons to be drawn from the picture of Absalom's fair exterior and repulsive reality:

1. Not to trust in our own exterior. There may be times when it is in one way or the other attractive—times when all will speak well of us. The outside life may make a good show, but unless there is "piety at home," the dark reality will come out some day, to our shame and sorrow.

2. Not to trust in the exterior of others. There are many young people bright, winning, fascinating, like Absalom. But before we trust ourselves to such a one—before we take such a one for a friend—let us try to find out something about the home life and the heart life. Dutiful sons and daughters will make reliable friends, and most especially if they seek to obey, not merely their earthly parents, but their Father in heaven.

Berean Methods.

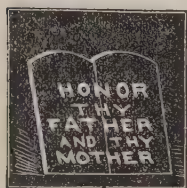
Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

A building in India suddenly fell, and it was found that the supports had been eaten through and honey-combed by a small worm. So David's throne suddenly tottered, but the germs of destruction had been long growing.... Notice the elements in Israelitish history leading to this catastrophe: 1.) Change in David's character: neglectful of duty, pleasure-loving. 2.) Alienation of the tribe of Judah. (See General Statement.) 3.) Evil and unpopular influences around the throne; Joab; intrigues in court; results of polygamy. 4.) Taxes and tribute from foreign wars, pressing upon the people, causing desire for change.... Notice the influences and causes which aided to form Absalom's character: 1.) A heathen mother; 2.) Early life in a palace; 3.) A father's neglect of training; 4.) Beauty causing flattery; 5.) Lack of moral principle.... Notice the character of Absalom as here shown. (See Analytical and Biblical Outline. "The Fast Young Man.").... Against what sins are we warned in this lesson? 1.) On David's side; 2.) On Absalom's side; 3.) On the people's side.... ILLUSTRATIONS. Napoleon said, "What France needs is good mothers.".... Dangers to the young in our time from immoral literature; leading boys to form gangs of bandits; clubs for burning buildings, as in Milwaukee, recently, and making the criminal a hero.

References. FOSTER'S ILLUSTRATIONS. Ver. 4: 6455. Ver. 5: 8755, 9092. Ver. 6: 2855. Ver. 7: 5951. Ver. 10: 115.... FREEMAN: Ver. 1: Running footmen, 314. Ver. 8: Vows, 851.

Primary and Intermediate.

BY M. V. M.

LESSON THOUGHT. *God's Way for Children.*

Use blackboard, and question upon the Golden Text. Whose word is this? To whom? What is it to honor? etc.

Let children name any of David's troubles that they can remember. Now that he was a great, powerful king would he have trouble? Yes, God lets trouble come to all his chil-

dren as long as they live here. Tell the story of Amnon and Absalom, how they often quarreled, and grew at last to hate one another. Show an apple and a bit of an apple-tree bough. These are quite unlike, and yet one bears the other. So, murder is the fruit of hatred. But there could have been no apple-tree without a seed. So there was a seed of sin in these hearts which grew up into hatred, and then the fruit of murder followed. Warn children against little bickerings which all grow out of selfishness, the worm which is always trying to crawl into our hearts. Print, "Love is God's spirit." "Hate is Satan's spirit." Which shall we choose? Which does God choose for us?

Tell of Absalom's absence from home and his return. When David saw sin in his heart he asked God to wash it away, but Absalom did not do this. So he came back to his father with the same old heart. David could not see his son's heart, and he believed that he had come back sorry for his sin. So he welcomed him and loved him just as of old. Tell how Absalom very soon went to work to steal the hearts of the people from his father.

Tell story of a wicked boy who stole all the money that his father had and ran away, leaving his own father to die in the poor-house. Did he have love in his heart? No, he had only self-love, and this is what Absalom had. Tell of Absalom's artful ways, and how at last he gained so many friends that David had to flee from his palace lest Absalom and his army should come there and kill him. Show a crooked branch, and tell that it was bent when young and tender. Absalom did not honor his father when a child. Now he was a man, and he did not care for God's word either.

God knows the best way for children, and he tells us what it is. Call for Golden Text, and tell that in the next lesson we shall see how Absalom's disobedience led to his ruin.

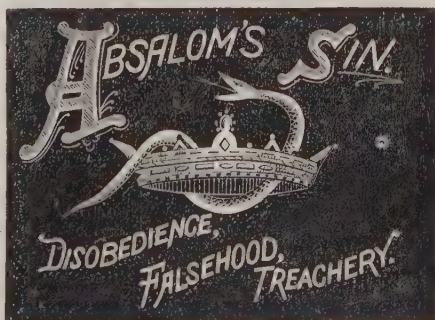
Lesson Word-Pictures.

And what is that noisy, huzzabing retinue, dashing down the street, fifty men running ahead, trampling horses and clattering chariots following after? Ah, it is the king's son, the showy Absalom, who is the center of this regal display. And here he is again, standing now at the city gate. What a handsome fellow, with symmetrical figure, with features sharply cut, with hair luxuriant and long-flowing, do we imagine Absalom to have been! It is a jostling crowd about him, some chaffering in trade, others intent upon a trial in progress, but the most are absorbed in their watch of the prince's movements. But why is Absalom here? Follow him with your eyes and see what he does, the crafty rebel. Up to the gate, comes—Nahum from the hill country? Yes, it is Nahum, so fond of notice, so sensitive to praise, so jealous of any invasion of his rights. He comes to-day in no sweet mood to see if an old grudge that he has against a neighbor can come before a judge. Sensitive Nahum from the hill country, feeling so very

solitary and so very small in the midst of that big, noisy crowd, notices the distinguished-looking prince at the gate, and what? Is the latter coming toward him? Does he wish to speak to him, the unknown rustic? "Tis the king's son, Absalom," somebody is whispering to Nahum. And how Nahum's heart flutters! He bends his head and bows profoundly, while Absalom in a brotherly way puts out his hand, seizes cordially the bewildered booby and kisses him. Nahum is intoxicated with pride, to be thus selected from the crowd and kissed before all! Well, Nahum, your merit has waited long for recognition, but your hour has come at last. What will they say up in the hill country about you, kissed by the king's son? "Of what city art thou?" inquires Absalom. "Thy servant is from the hill country," replies Nahum, bowing very low again. And now Absalom lowers a royal ear, and into it Nahum pours the story of his old grudge. What an honor to get so near that royal ear! "So—so! Indeed, I see! A plain case!" and Absalom wisely nods his head. "O that I were made judge in the land!" How he dishonors his father, and what a tickled, befooled Nahum! If he had gone a little farther, he might have found a judge. As it is, he goes home grumbling among his townsmen about "old David," but he is so charmed with "old David's" son! "Long live Absalom!" shouts Nahum. And now, one day, who are these men stealing over the land, whispering about a trumpet's sound and about Absalom reigning in Hebron? The spies! They quickly throw the country into a ferment. And Absalom himself is now stirring, two hundred fools at his heels, Nahum among them. The conspiracy goes like a wave over the land. It sweeps away even Ahithophel, David's trusted counselor. The noise of its rolling reaches Jerusalem. The city is confused. The royal household flees. There they go, Cherethites, Pelethites, Gittites, strong men of war, yet hurrying off as if boys. There they go, the servants of the king, and there goes the king himself, mighty in war and yet a timorous fugitive. Ah, it is not so much a king as a father smitten to the heart by the treachery of a son.

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



EXPLANATION. Absalom is represented as a serpent trying to possess a crown. His sin was disobedience, falsehood, and treachery.

SUGGESTION. Another design may be made by drawing the trunk of a tree, (two horizontal lines, with projecting, smaller lines for roots.) Write at bottom, *Rooted in disobedience.* Opposite the trunk write, *Growing in deceit.* Draw a limb and foliage, and write, *Bearing fruit.* Question the classes as to the kind of fruit such a tree would bear.

B. C. 1023.]

LESSON VII. ABSALOM'S DEATH.

[August 17.]

2 Sam. 18. 24-33. [*Commit to memory verses 32, 33.*]

24 And Da'vid sat between the two gates : and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold a man running alone.

25 And the watchman cried, and told the king. And the king said, If he be alone, *there is tidings in his mouth.* And he came apace, and drew near.

26 And the watchman saw another man running : and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold another man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings.

27 And the watchman said, Me thinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of A-him'a-az the son of Za'dok. And the king said, He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings.

28 And A-him'a-az called, and said unto the king, All is well. And he fell down to the earth upon his face

before the king, and said, Blessed be the Lord thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king.

29 And the king said, Is the young man Ab'sa-lom safe ? And A-him'a-az answered, When Jo'ab sent the king's servant, and me thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was.

30 And the king said unto him, Turn aside, and stand here. And he turned aside, and stood still.

31 And, behold, Cu'shi came ; and Cu'shi said, Tidings, my lord the king : for the Lord hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee.

32 And the king said unto Cu'shi, Is the young man Ab'sa-lom safe ? And Cu'shi answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rose against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is.

33 And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept ; and as he went, thus he said, O my son Ab'sa-lom, my son, my son Ab'sa-lom ! would God I had died for thee, O Ab'sa-lom, my son, my son !

General Statement.

From the unnatural hatred of his son, David fled across the valley of the Jordan, and rested not until he reached the ancient sanctuary of Mahanaim, among the hills of Gilead. Here he gathered his forces, under the leadership of the brave and loyal Joab, and prepared to fight for his crown. Absalom had lost his opportunity when he delayed the pursuit, and now the wave of revolution had stayed, the wiser view had begun to prevail, and a growing party was gathering around the old king. The two armies met in the wood of Ephraim, a thicket in Gilead, east of the Jordan. The veterans of David were more than a match for the larger, but less disciplined host of Absalom, and after a day of fighting in the dense forest the victory rested upon the standard of Joab. Absalom was caught by his long hair in the boughs of a tree, and was slain by the hand of Joab, who therein wisely disobeyed the order of

David. When success was assured, and the rebellion was no more, the young priest Ahimaz asked leave to carry the tidings to the king, who was watching at Mahanaim. But Joab knew that the message of Absalom's death would turn the sweetness of the victory into sorrow, and sent instead an Ethiopian slave to bear the unwelcome news. No sooner had the slave gone than Ahimaz renewed his request to go with tidings, and Joab now consented. The young priest, perhaps more familiar with the paths of Palestine than a foreigner, chose a better road, and reached first the resting-place of David. He brought the earliest news of the battle, but carefully avoided mention of Absalom's fate. When the Ethiopian arrived soon after he spoke out the truth that Absalom the rebel was dead. Then sorrow came to David's soul, and from the chamber over the gate he poured forth his bitter cry over his lost son.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 24. David sat. Awaiting the result of the battle, at Mahanaim, a city north of the Jabbok, on the east of Jordan. The place is not certainly identified, but at *Jerush*, which has the best claim, there still stands an ancient gateway, which may occupy the spot where David was waiting. **Between the two gates.** There were two gates, an outer and an inner, with the thickness of the wall between them. This formed a room, shaded and secure, where the king sat during the day while the battle was raging in the wood of Ephraim. **The watchman.** "The captain of the gate," or porter, whose business it was to open and shut the gate. **Went up to the roof.** Over the gate was a room, such as in oriental cities is often used as a guard-room for police purposes, and above this was the roof, surrounded by a parapet. Here the porter stood watching for a messenger from the battle. **A man running alone.** After the victory was assured, Joab, the commander of David's army, sent as messenger with the news, Cush or "the Cushite," that is, the Ethiopian, and probably a slave. But when Ahimaz besought the privilege of also bearing tidings, he allowed him to follow the Ethiopian. Ahimaz took another, and easier route, though a little longer ; outran his predecessor, and was the one whom the porter now saw.

25. The watchman cried. Calling from the tower to the ground, where David was waiting. **If he be alone, there is tidings.** If he had been flying from a defeat, there would have been other fugitives with him. David showed his usual quickness of apprehension and sagacious judgment in so slight a remark. **He came apace.** In the East, trained runners accompany every army, and often are able in a day's journey to outrun a horse.

26. Another man running. This was the Cushite, or the Ethiopian, who had started in advance of Ahimaz, but had been distanced in the race. **Called to the porter.** The porter was his assistant in the management of the gate, who was now stationed where he could hear the watchman from above, and transmit the word to the king. **He also bringeth tidings.** We may imagine the beating heart of the old king, eager for, yet dreading, the news, which must in either event give pain to his heart.

27. Ahimaz. He was a young priest, the son of Zadok, who had already shown trustworthiness, skill, and courage, in bringing to David news of Absalom's plans, (chap. 15. 27 ; 17. 17-21.) Joab had at first declined to permit him to bear news of the battle, knowing that the message of Absalom's death would bring sorrow, and he preferred to let the Ethiopian slave carry the evil tidings ; but after Cush had gone a distance, as Ahimaz was still eager to run, he allowed him, thinking that he would arrive after Cush. **Zadok.** He was the chief-priest in the line of Eleazar, the elder son of Aaron, as Abiathar was in the line of Ithamar, the younger son. The two were associated in the duties of the priesthood, and both were for David in the war, though at his suggestion they remained in Jerusalem with the ark, when the king fled from Absalom. **He is a good man.** David knew him well, and remembered how boldly and faithfully he had brought to him the word from Absalom's council. **Bringeth good tidings.** David rightly judged that one of such high position would not be sent with news of a defeat. (1) "The good tidings of the Gospel should always be borne by good men ; and how welcome should they be to us for their message's sake."—M. Henry.

28. All is well. In the original, the one word *Shalom!* "peace!" expressive of prosperity and success. **Fell down to the earth.** Prostrating himself before the king, after the manner shown on Egyptian and Assyrian monuments. **Blessed be the Lord.** The young priest did not forget, in the hour of triumph, from whom the victory came. (2) *It is well for us ever to keep in mind the Giver of all success. Delivered up the men.* Literally "shut up the men," by thwarting and putting down their projects. **Lifted up their hand.** There was something unnatural and revolting in Absalom's rebelling against and seeking to destroy a kind father, while David refused to slay his bitter enemy Saul.

29. The king said. Better for David had it been if he had asked this question earlier ; and of himself, rather than of another. He had failed to keep his wayward son safe from evil companions and from tempestuous passions ; and his anxiety in that moment showed that he felt that all the wrong had not been on Absalom's

side. (3) *There are times when care comes too late, and must give place to remorse. Is the young man Absalom safe?* Literally, "Is it peace to the youth Absalom?" The question shows the tenderness of the father overmastering the duty of a king; but its excuse lay in David's own guilty consciousness that his own sins had led to Absalom's crimes. (4) *If children knew how deep and unselfish is the love of their parents, they might less often neglect it. When Joab sent.* The text of this sentence in the original is probably wrong, and it should read, "When Joab the king's servant sent me thy servant." *I saw a great tumult, but I knew not.* This was false, for Ahimaaz knew that Absalom was dead, (verse 20,) but preferred to let the Ethiopian slave bring the unwelcome news.

30. Turn aside, and stand here. He takes his place among the courtiers surrounding the king, standing, for none might sit in the royal presence, and awaits a reward for his service.

31. Cushai came. The Ethiopian, who had started in advance but had been outrun by Ahimaaz. *Tidings, my lord.* The slave speaks bluntly, and without consideration for David's feelings. *The Lord hath avenged thee.* "Judged thee out of the hand of thine enemies;" meaning that God had given David justice in his cause.

32. Is the young man Absalom safe? As before, the uppermost thought in David's mind is for Absalom's life and safety. *The enemies of my lord....be as*

that young man. Perhaps the slave did not know the tenderness of David's feelings, and spoke as one who looked at Absalom's rebellion in its true light. A crime it was, and Joab was politic in disregarding David's instructions and putting Absalom to death, for not otherwise could the throne be secure.

33. The king was much moved. It added to his agony that his son was cut off in the midst of his crimes, with no opportunity for repentance, and especially that his guilt was the fruit of David's own sins. (5) *See in David's sorrow how surely sin brings to pass its bitter results. Went up.* By the stairs beside the gate to the room above it, occupying the space between the two walls. *And thus he said.* Eight times he repeated his wail over the lost son. There is an old Jewish legend that with each cry one of the seven gates of hell rolled back, and on the eighth the lost spirit of Absalom was admitted to paradise.—*Dean Stanley.* *Would God I had died for thee.* Too late now the vain wish to die for Absalom, when once he might have lived for Absalom. Yet he mourned, until recalled to his kingly duties by the sharp rebuke of Joab. Then at last he took his place before the people, and went back in triumph to his throne. Absalom left one daughter, who became the ancestress of kings, and a patron of idolatry. His pillar in the King's Dale has long since perished, for the monument which now bears his name is of later date, and Absalom left no memorial save the record of wasted opportunities and a ruined life.

HOME READINGS.

- M.* Absalom's death. 2 Sam. 18. 24-33.
Tu. Joab kills Absalom. 2 Sam. 18. 9-18.
W. Messengers sent to David. 2 Sam. 18. 19-23.
Th. David's lamentation. 2 Sam. 19. 1-10.
F. The end of an evil man. Prov. 2. 10-22.
S. Cursing of parents forbidden. Exod. 21. 7-17.
S. Love to heavenly Father. John 15. 1-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death. Mark 7. 10.

LESSON HYMN. 10.

Hymnal, No. 375.

Late, late, so late! and dark the night, and chill!
 Late, late, so late! But we can enter still.
 "Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now."

No light had we; for that we do repent,
 And learning this, the Bridegroom will relent.
 "Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now."

No light! so late! and dark and chill the night—
 O let us in, that we may find the light.
 "Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now!"

Have we not heard the Bridegroom is so sweet!
 O let us in, though late, to kiss his feet.
 "No! no! too late! ye cannot enter now!"

TIME.—B. C. 1033.

PLACE.—Mahanaim, in the tribe of Gad.

CONNECTING LINK.—Battle of the armies of David and Absalom "in the wood of Ephraim." 2 Sam. 18. 1-23.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—Parental responsibility.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. A Father's Anxiety, v. 24-31.

Where was David at this time, and how came he there?

Over whom was he anxious, and for what reason?
 What had been the result of the battle?
 How was the news of the battle brought to David?
 Who brought the first tidings, and what were they?
 What was David's question?
 Did David recognize himself as having any blame in the conduct of his son?

Was the death of Absalom just? [GOLDEN TEXT.]

2. A Father's Agony, v. 32, 33.

How was the news of Absalom's death brought to David?

How did David receive it?
 What did his sorrow show?
 Wherein was it right, and wherein wrong?
 What cause for his sorrow do we find in 1 Kings 1. 6?

How was David induced to cease from his sorrow? 2 Sam. 19. 5-8.

What measures did David take to regain the loyalty of his people? 2 Sam. 19. 9-15.

Practical Teachings.

How does this lesson show—

1. An example of fatherly affection?
2. A cause for fatherly sorrow?
3. The result of parental errors?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. A Father's Anxiety, v. 24-31.

For what was the king waiting?
 Why did he sit between the gates?
 What was told him?
 What hope did this news give the king?
 What was seen next?
 Who was the first messenger?
 How did the watchman recognize him?
 What news did Ahimaaz bring?
 What question showed David's anxiety?
 What doubtful answer did he receive?
 What was the second messenger's name?
 What reply did he make to the king's first question?

2. A Father's Agony, v. 32, 33.

What was David's next inquiry?
 Of what did Cushai's answer assure David?
 How was the king affected?
 How did he show his grief?
 What was the cry of the bereaved father?
 What sentiment toward his wicked son did this cry show?

What was written concerning disobedient children? [GOLDEN TEXT.]

How has God shown his love toward us? John 3. 16.

Tenachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—1. That love hopes for the best? 2. That a son's sin is a father's sorrow? 3. That nothing can destroy a father's love?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What took place between the armies of Absalom and David? **A great battle.**

Who was defeated? **The Israelites under Absalom.**

Who was killed? **David's son, Absalom.**

Where was David watching for news of the battle? **In the tower-house between the two gates.**

What did the watchman see in the distance? **Two men running singly.**

Of what was this a sign? **That David's army had won the victory.**

What did Ahimaaz call out to the king before reaching him? **"All is well."**

What did he tell David when he fell on his face before

him? That God had delivered up the men who were against his king. [safe?]

What was David's first question? "Is Absalom ^[safe?] Why did Ahimaaz answer as in verse 29? He did not have courage to tell the whole truth.

Why did David tell him to turn aside? So as to hear the news from the second runner.

What was Cush's news? "The Lord hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee." What did the king say unto Cush? "Is the young man Absalom safe?"

What was Cush's answer? "The enemies of my lord the king be as that young man is."

What did this answer tell David? That Absalom was dead. [Repeat GOLDEN TEXT.]

What did David do? He went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept for Absalom.

Words with Little People.

Away from God.—Absalom found sin, trouble, and a shameful death. With God.—You will find peace, happiness, and a heavenly home. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death."

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. Where did David wait for news of the battle? Between the two gates.
2. Who were sent to convey the news? Ahimaaz and Cush.
3. What did David ask of the messengers? "Is the young man Absalom safe?"
4. How did the announcement of Absalom's death affect David? He was much moved.
5. What did David say of Absalom? "Would God I had died for thee!"

TEXTS AT CHURCH.

Morning Text.....

Evening Text.....

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

The King at the Gate.

I. THE WATCHER.

1. *Sat between the two gates.* v. 24.
"Eli sat....his heart troubled." 1 Sam. 4. 13.
2. *Lifted up his eyes.* v. 24.
"Watchman, what of the night?" Isa. 21. 11.

II. THE MESSENGERS.

1. *A man running.* v. 26.
"Run, and not be weary." Isa. 40. 31.
2. *Came with good tidings.* v. 27.
"How beautiful....that bringeth." Isa. 52. 7.

III. THE INQUIRY.

- Is the young man....safe?* v. 29.
"Besought God for the child." 2 Sam. 12. 16.
"In the nurture....of the Lord." Eph. 6. 4.

IV. THE TIDINGS.

1. *All is well.* v. 28.
"To righteous....shall be well." Isa. 3. 10.
2. *Hath delivered up.* v. 28.
"All enemies under his feet." 1 Cor. 15. 25.
3. *Be as that young man.* v. 32.
"Ungodly....like the chaff." Psa. 1. 4.

V. THE SORROW.

1. *The king was much moved.* v. 33.
"A son that causeth shame." Prov. 19. 26.
2. *Went up....and wept.* v. 33.
"Others which have no hope." 1 Thess. 4. 13.
3. *Would God I had died.* v. 33.
"Yet sinners, Christ died for us." Rom. 5. 8.

ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.

Lessons from Absalom's Fate.

[From the Lesson Commentary.]

1. Absalom's end shows, as in a picture, the final ruin which is sure to befall all whose plans are for self and self alone.

2. Absalom's end shows that a father's anxiety over his son will not save him when he has neglected a father's duty in the past.

3. Absalom's end shows that our acts have an influence affecting others beyond ourselves. David's sorrow was so deep because he saw in Absalom's death the result of his own sin.

4. Absalom's end shows that repentance and sorrow will not reverse the consequences of past sin.

5. Absalom's end shows that parental love may make one blind even to kingly obligations.

6. Absalom's end shows that no gifts or graces or endowments will supply the lack of character. Absalom's beauty and popularity could not save his name from everlasting disgrace.

English Teacher's Notes.

WATCHING.—Surely, we all of us know something about this. Even little children have watched for the return of a father or sister, or the arrival of some stranger in whom they were interested. And some of them, perhaps, know that with which older people are so well acquainted—*anxious watching*—the face pressed against the window, the ear strained to catch the sound of approaching wheels, or, perhaps, the listening, minute after minute, for the postman's knock. To-day we have before us the picture of

An anxious watcher.

On the high tower overlooking the gate of Mahanaim, there stands a watchman, his gaze fixed upon the far distance. But the real watcher is below, waiting for the first tidings from the battle-field. And what is it that occupies his thoughts? On what is his mind fixed? Not on the issue of the battle to himself, not upon whether he shall have to flee for his life, or shall find himself again king over Israel. The one matter which absorbs his heart is the safety of his son Absalom. All will sympathize with the feelings of King Edward the Third, of England, when he watched his son engaged with the French on the field of Crecy, or those of Queen Victoria, watching for news of the Duke of Connaught, in Egypt. But David was watching with loving anxiety for the safety of an undutiful, a rebellious son, who had stolen the hearts of his father's subjects, who had violently seized his father's kingdom, and who, without the least compunction, could contemplate his father's death. Chap. 17. 2, 4. The heart of the father passed over all this. He thought not of the rebel, the rival king, the cruel enemy. To him this merciless foe was "the young man, Absalom." Vers. 5, 12, 29, 32. He could forgive every thing, he could forget every thing, if he might clasp his dear son once more. Truly a parent's love is wonderful. Children can never understand it; but they may consider it, and take it to heart. How often will the young go lightly into danger—danger to the body, and danger

to the soul—forgetful of the anxious watcher at home—the father who has warned them, the mother who has pleaded with them. One would think that if he had known how his father had done all he could to insure his safety, and how he sat watching and trembling for him, the knowledge must have broken Absalom's heart. Every generous-hearted boy will say: "I never could have held out against such a father." Let him mind that he never willingly causes anxiety to his own parents.

But One has said, even of a mother's love: "Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." Isa. 49. 15. The picture of the anxious watcher at the gate of Mahanaim gives us a faint insight into the heart of the Father above. The world is full of Absaloms who have risen up against their heavenly Father. "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me." Isa. 1. 2. But does he cast them off? What did the woman of Tekoah say to David? "Yet doth He devise means that his banished be not expelled from him." Chap. 14. 14. And what does he say of the rebellious Ephraim? "I do earnestly remember him still." Jer. 31. 30. "When he was yet a long way off his father saw him"—there is the divine Watcher.

"We watch and we wait,
And we stand at the gate,
While the shadows are piled."

That is what divine love is doing.

But Absalom, unlike the prodigal in Luke 15, never came home. And our next picture is that of *A royal mourner.*

The terrible news has come, at first vaguely and doubtfully, then plain and distinct in its bitterness—Absalom is dead—beyond the reach of his father's love, his father's care, his father's forgiveness. And the victory—that which gives David back his life, his home, his kingdom, his people, is turned to mourning. We should be inclined to think it a good thing that this heartless rebel, this wicked usurper, is out of the way, and can no longer bring trouble upon the land. But to David, the slain man is "my son, my son Absalom." Did he not meet with his just fate? Did he not bring it upon himself? Ah! David cannot think of that—"Would God I had died for thee!" Such is a father's love.

When young people get into trouble it is not they who suffer most. It was an ordinary mother, no noted heroine, who said to the sailor when the ship containing herself and her little ones was on fire: "If you will but save my children, I will consent to be burned in that flame." When "the bark that held a prince went down," seven hundred and fifty years ago in the British Channel, it was the king's son who met with a watery grave; but it was the father, Henry the Second, a king in no way noted for any excellence of character, who, from that day forth, "never smiled again."

David's wish that he might have died for his son was of no avail. But the Father in heaven gave his only begotten Son to die for the disobedient. The divine Son really gave his life for the rebellious chil-

dren. "Hereby perceive we love, (Rev. Ver.,) because he laid down his life for us." Who will resist this love? Yet it may be resisted. And there are no more mournful words in the Bible than the divine lament (if I may so speak) over those who refuse to be reconciled: "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." John 5. 40. "How often would I have gathered thy children together, . . . and ye would not." Matt. 13. 37.

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Draw the map, showing Hebron, Jerusalem, Jordan Valley, Mahanaim. Indicate the journey of David, and tell the story, and mark the supposed place of the battle. . . . A word-picture: 1.) Of Absalom's death in the thicket; 2.) Of David's watching at the gate; 3.) Of the messengers and David's sorrow. . . . Draw out the practical lessons of two aspects of the lesson, first, concerning Absalom; and secondly, concerning David. Show how Absalom's fate illustrates the career of the fast young man of to-day, and how David's sorrow illustrates parental love. . . . Do not forget to show the Christ in the lesson. If David loved his son, God loves his children still more. But David could not save Absalom, though he was willing to die for him. Our Saviour saves us by dying for us. . . . ILLUSTRATION. When a cannon has been aimed and fired, the one who has discharged it may sorrow, may reverse the aim, may bury it in the earth, but that will not undo its destructive work. So when character has wrought out its legitimate tendencies in evil conduct, mourning and repentance will not change the results of errors and mistakes.

References. FOSTER'S ILLUSTRATIONS. Verses 24-32: Poetical, 3084, 3085. Vers. 23, 31: Prose, 4211. Ver. 33: Poetical, 8; Prose, 7487, 10657. . . . FREEMAN. Ver. 24: Double gates, 232. Ver. 26: Watchman and porter, 283. Ver. 33: Chamber over the gate, 284, 333.

Primary and Intermediate.

BY M. V. M.

LESSON THOUGHT. *Self-love leads to Death.*

Review the story of Absalom's rebellion and the king's flight, calling out the fact that all this trouble came from Absalom's self-love. Ask if Absalom's conduct would have been different if he had loved God instead of self? How would he have treated his brother, his father, his God? He did not follow God's way, but his own. Let us see the end.

THE SON'S DEATH.

Recall Absalom's journey to Hebron under false pretenses, the calling the people to him by the sound of the trumpet, Absalom and his army marching toward Jerusalem and David's army in pursuit. The battle and the tragical death of Absalom. The story, as told in 2 Sam. 15, 16, 17, 18, should be familiar to the teacher. Print, "The wages of sin is death," and question about Absalom's sin, leading children to see that it all resulted from disobedience to God's command. Call for the fifth commandment, and talk familiarly about obedience to parents, showing that to obey them is to obey God.

THE FATHER'S GRIEF.

Describe David, sitting in the gates waiting for news of the battle. Ask if children think the king loved his wicked, rebellious son. Yes, though he had been so

disobedient and ungrateful, yet David loved him. Teach that so God loves his children when they are naughty, and waits and watches for them to come back to him, because he is our Father. Read the lesson, or tell the story of the way the king received the sad news, dwelling especially upon his lament, and teaching that this is a picture of the love which led our Father in heaven to send Jesus to die for us. David wished that he might have died for his son; Jesus came and really died for those who did not love or obey him. Draw a crown of thorns, or pin up picture of one, and ask who wore such a crown, and why. Teach that our little acts of disobedience and rebellion are the thorns that pierce Jesus. If we love him we shall not want to hurt him. Call for Golden Text, and show



how Absalom cursed his father by his disobedience. What punishment befell him? Yes, death, for God had promised it, and his promises never fail. Teach that disobedience to parents may not always be punished immediately, but it is sure to be soon or later, and that the only safe way is to obey God's word, and love him rather than self.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

And nothing from the battle yet? It has been fought somewhere, a terrible battle. Spearmen and swordsmen have crashed against one another in sad, bloody confusion. Many have been slain, many wounded. Under a certain great, shadowy oak, a man is helplessly hanging, caught in the boughs while swiftly riding below and suspended by the head. He was hanging rather, but dart after dart was thrust into him, his body has been taken down and now is hid under a black heap of stones. As if the plague were there, all the people are fleeing away from it, and yet it covers a king's son, Absalom. Does the king know of it, know of the terrible battle, know of the accursed stone heap near the oak, hiding its dreadful tale of blood? Has no news come, brought by any rider, brought by any runner on foot, saying the king's crown is safe, and—what of Absalom? No tidings yet! The king is ignorant. Go up, O watchman, to the wall, and look off for some sign of a messenger! And there he stands on the rough, stony wall, his hand shading his eyes as he tries to pierce the veil of blue haze drawn across the distant hills. "Nothing!" he murmurs. But hold! Can you not see a black point away off on the slope of that hill like a fly crawling down? "No, it is a ledge in the pasture of an old countryman, Zeruiah." "But it is moving!" "Some animal, perhaps a sheep in Zeruiah's sheep-pasture." No, it is a man running! The messenger is coming, David. Be patient a little longer. But there is another black dot away off in Zeruiah's sheep-pasture, and that is moving—and it is a man also

—and a man running! Another messenger from the battle doubtless. How wildly the king's heart beats! What will they say? The first messenger is close at hand. It is Ahimaaz, and how splendidly he runs! His robes are all gathered up, his girdle about the loins has been tightened, and he runs like a gazelle. But what news, Ahimaaz? Quick! Tell your story! And Ahimaaz tells his story of victory at the feet of the king. How David straightens, lifting higher his rescued crown. But what about that man in the oak? Ahimaaz knows nothing, at least tells nothing. But here is the second messenger, Cush, a fleet runner, and yet inferior to Ahimaaz, who started behind him. Cush comes up panting, almost breathless, and with excited look tells also of victory. But that dead body under the stone heap, what about that? Will you tell of Absalom? "The enemies—of my—lord, the king, and—all that—rise against—thee to do thee—hurt, be as—that young man is," says Cush, catching his breath. What have you done, Cush? Did you bring one of Joab's darts, plucked out of the heart of Absalom, and did you smite the king with it? Look! It is no proud king now, who has saved his crown, but a bowed, moaning old father, with crown drooping, who goes up to the chamber over the gate, who weeps, who wails in bitter words, "O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



Absalom's death followed quickly his sin of treachery. He had no hope in his death. He died in sin. The illustration of the closed door of mercy may be used with to-day's lesson. David loved his son even though he was in rebellion against him. He was ready to forgive him, and his heart was filled with anxiety for him. Absalom gave him no such opportunity. He died. The door was closed, and he was too late to enter.

APPLICATION. A sinner rebelling against Christ. The Saviour's love. The open door of mercy. The death of the sinner. "Too late! ye cannot enter now."

B. C. 1617.]

2 Sam. 24. 15-25.



destroyed the people, it is enough; stay now thine

LESSON VIII. THE

[Commilit to memory verses 24, 25.]

15 So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel, from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Be'er-she'ba seventy thousand men.

16 And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Je-ru-sa-lem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that

PLAGUE STAYED.

[August 24.]

hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing-place of A-rau'nah the Jeb'u-site.

17 And David spake unto the LORD, when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house.

18 And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the LORD in the threshing-floor of A-rau'nah the Jeb'u-site.

19 And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up, as the LORD commanded.

20 And A-rau'nah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him: and A-rau'nah went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground.

21 And A-rau'nah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And Da'vid said, To buy the threshing-floor of thee, to build an altar unto the Lord, that the plague may be stayed from the people.

22 And A-rau'nah said unto Da'vid, Let my lord the king take and offer up what seemeth good unto him; behold, *here be* oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and *other* instruments of the oxen for wood.

23 All these *things* did A-rau'nah, as a king, give unto the king. And A-rau'nah said unto the king, The Lord thy God accept these.

24 And the king said unto A-rau'nah, Nay; but I will surely buy *it* of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt-offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So Da'vid bought the threshing-floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

25 And Da'vid built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. So the Lord was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Is'ra-el.

General Statement.

Not long after Absalom's rebellion, or perhaps (as some believe) not long before it, David sinned against God's will in numbering the people. The evil was not in taking the census of Israel, but in cherishing the ambitious purpose which led to it. The success of the foreign wars, resulting in the conquest of Edom, Moab, Ammon, and Syria, had made Israel supreme from the Wilderness to the Euphrates. David and his nobles imagined that now, while the twelve tribes were strong, and while Egypt and Assyria were weak, was the hour of opportunity to establish a great empire, rivaling those of Chaldaea and Assyria, which had passed away. They planned to lead forth an invincible host, to cross the Euphrates and the Nile, to conquer the lands of the Plain and by the Mediterranean, and to make Jerusalem the capital of the world. But to do this was to set aside God's purpose for Israel, which was an inheri-

ance infinitely greater than empire, even the possession of the truth. The divine plan was that Israel should bear the message of salvation, and not the sword of conquest, to all the world. If David had succeeded in his ambitious designs, he might have ranked in history beside Sargon and Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus and Alexander, as the founder of one of the great oriental empires, but the Kingdom of God would have lost its purity, and the salvation of the world might have been set back ten centuries. In love for his people the Almighty crushed their plans. In a single day seventy thousand of the people died, and boasting was turned to sorrow. Our lesson tells how the plague was stayed, just as it reached the capital, how out of its darkness dawned the morning of peace, and how the first steps were taken toward the founding of the temple, which was to be the greatest glory of Israel.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 15. So. In accordance with David's choice, to suffer from the hand of the Lord rather than of men. [Read the General Statement, for an account of the circumstances.] **The Lord sent.** The pestilence came under a divine law and for a divine purpose, the discipline of his people. Isaac Taylor says, "These calamities come through the ordinary operation of law; but these laws have been so adjusted by the Divine Governor of the world, that through them, and without any miraculous interference with them, he visits moral evil with physical chastisement." **A pestilence.** Sudden plagues have always been very destructive in the East, from the heat of the climate, bad drainage, neglect of sanitary laws, and lack of medical knowledge. **To the time appointed.** An obscure clause; which would appear to mean, "to the end of the three days," but may mean, until the time referred to in the next verse. Some think this was a phrase meaning, "to the time appointed for the evening sacrifice." **From Dan to Beersheba.** Dan was the town at the source of the Jordan, and the northern limit of the Twelve Tribes. Its history is given in Judges 18. Beersheba was one of the homes of the patriarchs, on the border of the desert, and in southern Judah. The two places were one hundred and fifty miles apart. **Seventy thousand.** This was the most destructive pestilence in Jewish annals. Sennacherib's army lost 185,000 in a night, and a plague in the Carthaginian army besieging Syracuse destroyed 100,000 men. (1) *How sudden, how mighty, and how terrible, are the judgments of God!*

16. The angel. We know but little about angels, but it is clear from Scripture that they are the messengers and executors of God's will, in temporal and spiritual things. **Stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem.** There seems to be an allusion to a visible appearance, perhaps not seen by all, but by those in a high state of spiritual enlightenment, or those specially chosen to receive the vision. In the history of our race God has more than once thus revealed himself. Such revelations, however, are not now necessary to spiritual character. **The Lord repented him.** Not that God changed his will or his feelings, or regretted what he had done; but he altered his plan as men altered their conduct, and changed his relation from wrath to mercy, as men changed theirs from sin to repentance. (2) *Repentance is never an emotion, but always an act of the will.* (3) *God always repents when man does.* **Stay now thine hand.** (4) *God is always eager to show mercy, and delights in withholding his threatened judgments.* **Was by the threshing-place.** A level place, smoothed like a floor, where grain was threshed by being trodden over by oxen. It was generally on an elevation, where the wind would carry away the chaff. This was on Mount Moriah, east of Mount Zion, and at that time outside the wall of Jerusalem. God stayed the angel at the same spot where he had stayed Abraham from sacrificing his son. **Araunah.** In 1 Chron.

21, called Ornan, and elsewhere spelled variously, as a foreign word in Hebrew letters. From his title in verse 23, it has been inferred that he had been the king of the Jebusites before the capture of the city. (Lesson 1,) and had been spared by David. **The Jebusites.** A Canaanite race who dwelt in and around Jerusalem at the time of Joshua's conquest, and held their fortress through all the period of the Judges, until the place was taken by David early in his reign.

17. David spake unto the Lord. As we speak unto the Lord in earnest prayer. **When he saw the angel.** Whether others saw the angel besides David, the elders of Israel, (1 Chron. 21, 16,) Araunah and his sons, is not stated. **Lo, I have sinned.** David, a true penitent, takes all the blame upon himself, for he knew the extent of his own sin, but not that of others. (5) *A true repentance of sin offers no excuse, but hides itself in the mercy of God.* **These sheep.** The people, who were led by their rulers like a flock of sheep. Yet the people sinned with their king in pride and the worldly spirit. **Let thine hand be against me.** David, in offering his own life for the nation at the altar on Moriah, was a foretoken or type of Christ, offering his life for the world on Calvary; but with the difference that David was guilty, while Christ was innocent. (6) *Let us find the sinner's refuge in the smitten side of David's greater Son.*

18. Gad. This was a prophet, who had doubtless been David's early companion in the prophetic school of Samuel at Ramah. 1 Sam. 19, 20. He joined him in the cave Adullam, and gave him counsel during the period of his exile. Afterward, he wrote the history of David's reign. 1 Chron. 29, 29. **Said unto him.** Speaking by divine direction; as the prophets lived in close fellowship with God. **Rear an altar.** The altar and its offerings were the outward tokens of a repentance of the heart and consecration to God; without which the form would be of no avail. **In the threshing-floor.** Because at that spot the angel was seen standing. (7) *The place of the curse must be the place of the atonement.*

19. David...went up. His heart must have trembled as he climbed the hill toward the being bearing the flaming sword; but he obeyed, though he may have thought that there he might die for his people. **As the Lord commanded.** (8) *No servant of the Lord need fear to go where his Master has pointed the way.*

20. Araunah looked. He was threshing wheat with his sons, when he saw the angel and hid in a cave. 1 Chron. 21, 20. He now sees David and the elders of Israel coming toward him. **The king and his servants.** David was accompanied by the elders of the people, all clad in sackcloth to manifest their sorrow and humiliation. 1 Chron. 21, 16. **Araunah went out.** From the cave where he was hidden, which may have

been the hollow place under the ancient rock now standing on Mount Moriah. **Bowed himself.** The old king and the new, the Jebusite and the Israelite, met at the place of the altar, like Jew and Gentile meeting around the cross of a common Saviour.

21. Wherefore is my lord the king. In this address the Jebusite showed a kingly, generous, loyal, and religious spirit. (9) *Araunah was the harbinger of the Gentile world bowing before the Son of David.* **To buy the threshing-floor.** The careful reader of the Old Testament will see that the kingdom of Israel was not like an oriental despotism, holding all life and property under the will of the king, but a regulated constitutional monarchy, respecting the rights of the people.

22. Araunah said. Showing that though a foreigner he had accepted the God of Israel. **Here be oxen.** Those with which he was threshing the grain. **Threshing instruments.** Sledges, armed underneath with spikes for breaking up the stalks, and shaking out the grain. **Instruments of the oxen.** Yokes, and other parts of the simple harness in use in the East. **For wood.** For the fire on which the offering was to be laid.

23. Araunah as a king. Some regard this as evidence that he had been the king of the Jebusites during their independence, but others consider it as meaning

"in a kingly, munificent manner." **The Lord thy God accept thee.** A wish that God would receive the offering, and have mercy upon the people.

24. I will surely buy it. For otherwise it would have been Araunah's offering, and not David's. **That which costs me nothing.** To offer that which costs nothing would be to contradict the essential idea of sacrifice. (10) *Let us remember this principle in our offerings to the cause of Christ.* **Bought the threshing-floor and the oxen.** For the immediate necessities of the offering. David purchased the level place on the summit of the hill. **Fifty shekels of silver.** Equal to \$27.37, the shekel being worth 54.74 cents. Afterward, when the place was chosen as the site of the temple, David purchased the entire hill for six hundred shekels of gold, or \$5,256. It is supposed that the spot is now covered by "The Dome of the Rock," misnamed the Mosque of Omar, under which rises a rough mass of native rock, seventeen feet above the level of the inclosure. This was probably the place of the altar in Solomon's temple.

25. Burnt-offerings. In which the entire animal was burned upon the altar, indicating full consecration to God. **Peace-offerings.** In which a part of the offering was eaten before the altar, as a token of restored fellowship with God. **Entreated.** Heard David's prayer, and withheld the plague.

HOME READINGS.

- M.* The plague stayed. 2 Sam. 24. 15-25.
Tu. The cause of the plague. 2 Sam. 24. 1-14.
W. The great plague threatened. Exod. 11. 1-10.
Th. The great plague fulfilled. Exod. 12. 21-38.
F. The plague for murmuring. Num. 16. 41-50.
S. Punishment for sin. Ezek. 5. 11-17.
S. The true repentance. Acts 2. 37-47.

GOLDEN TEXT.

So the Lord was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel. 2 Sam. 24. 25.

LESSON HYMN. C. M.

Hymnal, No. 157.

To thee, O Lord of life, we prayed,
 And did for succor flee:
 "O save," in our distress we said,
 "The souls that trust in thee."
 How good thou art! how large thy grace!
 How ready to forgive!
 Thy mercies crown our fleeting days;
 And by thy love we live.
 Our eyes no longer drowned in tears,
 Our feet from falling free,
 Redeemed from death and guilty fears,
 O Lord, we'll live to thee.

TIME.—B. C. 1017.

PLACE.—The threshing-floor of Araunah, the Jebusite, on Mount Moriah, the place where the Temple was afterward built.

CONNECTING LINKS.—The people numbered. 2 Sam. 24. 1-14.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—Atonement for sin.

Monthly Temperance Meeting.—Topics: 1. Temperance: What is it? 2. Why we should understand God's law.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

- 1. The Hand of Destruction, v. 15, 16.**
 What was the cause for the destruction? v. 10.
 What was the sin in the act of David?
 Why should the people suffer for the sins of the king?
 What visible manifestation was seen?
 Where was it revealed?
- 2. The Voice of Supplication, v. 17.**
 Who offered prayer, and what did he pray?
 How did this show a noble spirit?
 What traits of true penitence are here shown?
- 3. The Altar unto the Lord, v. 18-25.**
 Who commanded the altar to be built?
 Where was it built?
 From whom was the ground purchased?
 What character did the owner of the land show?
 Why was this especially generous in Araunah?
 What was David's answer to his offer?
 What was done for the altar?

For what was the place of this altar afterward used? 2 Chron. 3. 1.

Practical Teachings.

How are we here shown—

1. That sin brings suffering?
2. That God hears prayer?
3. That our offerings to God should be of our own possessions?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

- 1. The Hand of Destruction, v. 15, 16.**
 What calamity came upon Israel?
 On account of whose sin was it sent?
 How many people were slain?
 What city was in great peril?
 Why did the angel spare it?
 When did the pestilence cease?
- 2. The Voice of Supplication, v. 17.**
 Who made intercession for the people?
 What plea did he make for them?
 What acknowledgment did he make?
 What atonement did he propose?
 What intercessor have the people of God now? Rom. 8. 34.
- 3. The Altar unto the Lord, v. 18-25.**
 What people visited the king?
 What charge did he give to David?
 How was the command received?
 What reception did Araunah give the king?
 What did David say his errand was?
 For what purpose was the altar to be erected?
 What offer did Araunah make?
 What reason did David give for not accepting it as a gift?
 What is true giving?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where are we shown in this lesson—

1. That punishment follows guilt?
2. That God is long-suffering and merciful?
3. That true sacrifice means self-sacrifice?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

- What did God send upon Israel? **A great plague.**
 How many people died of the plague? **Seventy thousand.**
 Who stayed the hand of the destroying angel at Jerusalem? **The Lord.**
 Where was the angel standing? **By the threshing-place of Araunah the Jebusite.**
 What is a threshing-place? **A round plot of ground where corn is trodden out by oxen.**
 What did David say unto the Lord when he saw the angel? **"I have sinned."**
 What did he ask of the Lord? **To punish him, but spare his people.** [Repeat GOLDEN TEXT.]
 What was David commanded to do? **To build an altar unto the Lord.**
 Where was he to build it? **In the threshing-floor of Araunah.**

What did David do? **He went up to Araunah to buy the threshing-floor.**

Where was the threshing-floor? **On Mount Moriah, north-east of Zion.**

What did Araunah do? **He offered to give the king the threshing-floor and every thing else he wanted.**

What did the king reply? **"Nay, I will buy it of thee."** [For fifty shekels of silver.

For what did David buy the threshing-floor and oxen? Why did David refuse Araunah's offer? **He would not offer sacrifices to God that cost him nothing.**

What did David offer upon the altar which he built? **Burnt-offerings to stay the plague, and peace-offerings of thanksgiving when the plague ceased.**

Words with Little People.

Little people sometimes forget—That God sees all their acts. That God knows all their thoughts. That if they forget him he will let them suffer. That if they disobey his commands he will not count them among his people. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments."

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. What did the Lord send upon Israel? **A pestilence.**

2. What did the Lord say when the angel would have destroyed Jerusalem? **"It is enough; stay now thine hand."**

3. What did David say to the Lord? **"Let thine hand be against me."**

4. What did God tell David to do? **"Rear an altar unto the Lord."**

5. What happened when David built the altar and offered sacrifices and entreated the Lord? **"The plague was stayed from Israel."**

TEXTS AT CHURCH.

Morning Text.....

Evening Text.....

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

The Acceptable Sacrifice.

I. THE SACRIFICE OF CONFESSION.

I have sinned....done wickedly. v. 17.

"Whoso confesseth....shall have mercy." Prov. 28. 13.

"If we confess....forgive us." 1 John 1. 9.

II. THE SACRIFICE OF SUBMISSION.

Let thine hand....be against me. v. 17.

"Submit yourselves....to God." James 4. 7.

"Thou, O God, hast proved us." Psa. 66. 10.

III. THE SACRIFICE OF SELF-DENIAL.

Buy it of thee at a price. v. 24.

"Tithes into the store-house." Mal. 3. 10.

"The liberal soul....made fat." Prov. 11. 24.

IV. THE SACRIFICE OF ATONEMENT.

Burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. v. 25.

"The precious blood of Christ." 1 Pet. 1. 19.

"Reconciled....death of his Son." Rom. 5. 10.

V. THE SACRIFICE OF PRAYER.

The Lord was entreated. v. 25.

"Come....return unto the Lord." Hos. 6. 1.

"In every thing....prayer and supplication." Phil. 4. 6.

ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.

Sin and Forgiveness.

1. Long-continued prosperity is apt to result in forgetfulness of God, worldly ambition, and sin.

2. Sin brings its own result of suffering and penalty: David's pride in his kingdom led to the plague which desolated it. v. 15.

3. God's judgment is closely associated with his mercy. He punished Israel in love, and he pitied before the prayer was offered. v. 16.

4. When God's wrath smites, is the time for confession of sin, and a recognition of justice. v. 17.

5. A true confession seeks no excuse for sin, but shows the spirit of entire submission to God's just punishment. v. 17.

6. Mercy is always associated with a sacrifice; and the offerings of the Old Testament were but symbols of the great sacrifice of Christ. v. 18.

7. Our offerings to God must be our own, and not the gifts of others; each must stand by himself before God. v. 24.

English Teacher's Notes.

THE enemies of truth have often asserted that the Gospel story shows us, on the one hand, the divine Father full of wrath against sinful man, and on the other hand, the Son of God appeasing his Father's anger, and by the sacrifice of himself wringing from God that pardon which he was unwilling to give. And so foreign to the natural mind is the right understanding of God, and of his ways, that men sometimes pray and entreat for mercy as though he were loth to give it, and must be importuned for that in which the Bible tells us he delights. Micah 7. 18. Such a lesson as the following gives the teacher an opportunity of grounding his scholars well in the opposite truth, namely, that God himself provided the sacrifice for the sin of men, that "the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world," and that the first movement is not in the heart of man toward God, but in the heart of God toward man.

The history recorded in to-day's passage is not the story of an ordinary sacrifice, or simply of the removal of one of God's judgments. It is the introduction to the founding of that temple where, day after day, and year after year, the types of the great sacrifice to be offered on Calvary were reproduced. It shows how the spot was indicated which the Lord had chosen to "place his name there" (Deut. 12. 5; 26. 2) until he came, who is "Emmanuel, God with us."

As yet, David was unaware where the house of the Lord, which Solomon, his son, was to build, was to be erected. It was when the time of need came that this was revealed. When the sin of David had brought destruction upon thousands of Israel, and the terrible cry of mourning had arisen throughout the land, together with a fearful looking for of further judgment, (for there were two days of pestilence yet to come,) then the place was pointed out where God would "hear from heaven, his dwelling place, and forgive." 1 Kings 8. 30, etc. And the first thing of which we read in connection with this is of

God repenting. "The Lord repented him of the evil." It is a remarkable expression, but used several times in the Bible. It must not be understood as implying that God had changed his original purpose, for we are told that "with him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." What does it,

then, mean? When we say, "The sun is melting hot," we do not mean that the sun has in any way changed, but that its heat is flowing forth unhindered. We associate with the idea of repentance a softness, a melting of the heart; in man this takes the place of former hardness; in God it is always present: "His compassions fail not." Lam. 3. 22. But when this compassion makes a way to manifest itself, when it flows forth full and unhindered to the sinner, we read of God repenting.

And what followed this in the heart of David? When the sun shines forth with melting warmth, the ice that has formed on the surface of the streams disappears, and again the unhindered current rushes onward to the sea. David's conscience had spoken before, (ver. 10 ;) he had bowed in submission to the just punishment of his sin, (ver. 14;) but now we find his heart utterly softening, and his prayer rising up to God that he alone might bear the remainder of wrath: "Let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house." This was true repentance. And next we read of

God providing. The "repenting" of God is no mere passing over of sin. In mercy, he cannot forget justice. If the sinner is to be restored to favor, atonement must be made for the sin. And that is just what man cannot do. The sacrifice of David's life could not have stayed the consequences of David's sin. But when the compassion of God goes forth to the sinner he says: "Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom." Job 33. 24. And so the messenger was sent to tell David by what means the plague might be averted; the place was marked out where God would accept an offering—where God would "hear and forgive;" the foreshadowing, we know of that One "name, . . . whereby we must be saved." Acts 4. 12. And there the king was directed to build an altar for sacrifice.

What was the response of David? Immediate obedience: "He went up as the Lord commanded." He was not content with having the appointed place and the necessary implements lent him. He must make them his own. And then, with a glad heart he offered "burnt-offerings and peace-offerings" in the chosen place, and there God accepted him, and "the plague was stayed."

Thenceforward the "threshing-floor of Araunah, (or Ornan,) the Jebusite," became the place of sacrifice, and was marked out as the spot for the house of the Lord, for the building of which David at once began to make preparation. 1 Chron. 22. 1, 2, etc. Many years had elapsed since David had expressed his desire to build such a house; and many of them had been years of declension, of sin, and of sorrow. But God had not forgotten Israel, nor his promise to David. And in the hour of greatest darkness and peril, God's compassion came forth, God's provision made the way, and so preparation was made for that temple which was to be the outward sign to all that God dwelt in the midst of Israel, and the type of the redemption to be accomplished by Christ.

God moving toward man first. That is the great lesson we may learn from this history. But what should follow it? Man responding to God, as David did. When God says, "Seek ye my face," who will reply with David, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek." Psa. 27. 8?

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

It might be well to open with a picture or description of the "Dome of the Rock," in Jerusalem, where the rock of Araunah's threshing-floor may still be seen.... The causes of the pestilence, why it came.... Notice the spirit of pride and ambition from which David's sin arose.... How God punished David's sin.... The traits of the divine nature and character displayed in this story: 1.) God's notice of sin; 2.) God's holiness; 3.) His justice; 4.) His almighty power; 5.) His pity, tenderness; 6.) His willingness to hear and answer prayer.... The way of salvation for a sinner: 1.) Confession of sin; 2.) Recognition of God's justice; 3.) Sacrifice; 4.) Prayer.... How to come before God. (See Analytical and Biblical Outline.)... ILLUSTRATIONS. The destruction of Sennacherib's host, when one hundred and eighty-five thousand men perished in a night. (2 Kings 19.)... Nebuchadnezzar's punishment for pride. (Dan. 4.)... The Rich Fool, in Christ's parable, "This thing thy soul shall be required of thee." Luke 12. 13-21.

References. FOSTER'S ILLUSTRATIONS. Ver. 10-17: Poetical, 3303, 3311. Ver. 15: Prose, 6568, 9888. Ver. 16: Prose, 130. Ver. 17: Prose, 4580. Ver. 24: Prose, 6131. 8965. Ver. 25: Prose, 6957, 10800.... FREEMAN: Ver. 22: Threshing instrument, 508.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

For three days the pestilence has been raging. O days that were nights and nights that were years! The death-shadow might fall on any soul, and darken any place. Like sin, it is every-where. Like sin, it kills what it touches. It suddenly hushes the prattle of the babe in its mother's arms, finds the shepherd and his flock in the most secluded valley, overtakes the traveler fleeing day and night from its dreaded presence. Only three days, and it is a land of death, of bitter wailing, of broken hearts. But look up into the sky above the threshing-place of Araunah, the Jebusite. Wonderful form of light, motionless, stately, silent, the dreaded angel of the Lord! No word, no movement, only that awful glory! Does King David see it? Yes, he is coming this way, bowed with grief, a terror in his face, his bewildered servants clustered about him. Run to meet the king, Araunah! There before the king, Araunah humbly bows his face to the earth. David stops. His servants stop. But let them not delay long. There is that still halting, awful form of light above the threshing-floor. And would David buy the threshing-floor to build an altar and offer sacrifices? Araunah is eagerly holding out his hands and tendering all things. No, the costless is worthless in sacrifice. Let Araunah take David's silver. There in the threshing-place, they build an altar. I hear them breaking up the threshing instruments for fuel. They kindle the fire. They bring forward the oxen for sacrifice. The smoke rolls up in a dense cloud from the offerings. The king, his servants, Araunah and his household, look on in silence that is supplication. And the angel? He has faded out of sight like the white summer cloud.

melting into the air. The land is free from the death-shadow, driven away like sin by penitence and prayer. Babes prattle again in their mother's arms. The traveler unharmed continues his journey, and in sheltered valleys the shepherd-boy sings as he strikes his harp or leads his flock to the cool "still waters."

Primary and Intermediate.

BY M. V. M.

LESSON THOUGHT. *The Use of Prayer.* To be taught: 1.) What a plague is. 2.) How God uses a plague sometimes to show people their sins. 3.) That sin is a plague, and how it may be cured.

1. Speak of some disease of which children have heard, as scarlet fever or diphtheria; tell that it sometimes comes into a town and spreads until many are sick. If it becomes very general, so that in nearly every house some one is sick or dead, it is called a plague. Tell of the terrible sickness which visited the city of London once, known as the Great Plague. Give some details if thought best, and read the first verse of the lesson, calling attention to the greatness of the plague which in three days destroyed seventy thousand people.



2. Tell the strange sight which David saw, an angel with a sword held out over the city. The sword means death. Then David knew that he had sinned and that God was displeased. Tell what David's sin was—pride. He was proud of his kingdom, the great number of his subjects, and that he

may have counted the people thinking to make war and so increase his greatness. Teach that God wants even kings to be humble and to depend upon him. Read David's prayer, and tell the remainder of the story. Sum it up in the Golden Text, showing that God is ready to forgive as soon as sin is truly repented of and put away.

3. There is a greater plague than any disease that can

come upon the body. Talk about sin, telling what it does, and leading children to see how it kills the soul. The one cure for this plague is found in God's forgiveness of sin. Tell story of young girl who lived in a town where the plague broke out. She thought that those who loved God would not be touched by it, but found that many Christians died. Then she learned that God is the dwelling-place which no plague can enter. Print "God is our refuge," and teach that any child who fears the plague of sin in his own heart and wants to have it stayed has only to ask God and he will stop it. That is just what Jesus came into the world to do for us.

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



The shield of prayer is represented as stopping the sword of destruction. David prayed, and God heard him. This lesson teaches the importance of prayer.

ANOTHER DESIGN. Draw a hand, (place your own against the board, and trace a line around it,) and write the word "Destruction." Draw another hand, and write the word "Mercy." Over all write the words, "Prayer Changes," teaching that prayer changes the hand of destruction to the hand of mercy.

B. C. —.]

LESSON IX. GOD'S WORKS AND WORD.

[August 31.]

Psa. 19. 1-14.

[Commit to memory verses 7-11.]



1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

3 There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.

4 Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the

end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun;

5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

6 His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple:

8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes:

9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the honeycomb.

11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

12 Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.

13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

General Statement.

It is night over the hills of Palestine, and the psalmist stands upon the battlements of the Holy City, gazing up to the dark heavens, in which the stars, the sentinels of God, fulfill their ceaseless marches. To his poetic eye their glow is but the reflection of their Creator's glory, and to his ear they sing songs of faith and hope, which the dull unbeliever cannot hear. Through the night-watches the psalmist gazes until the stars pale

under the dawn, and the landscape is flooded with the beams of the rising sun. Faith beholds in stars and sun alike only the messengers of the Almighty, and the psalmist sings the God whom the heavens reveal. Then from the works of God he turns to meditate upon the words of God, and chants the glory of the law, which is the bulwark of his throne, and his gift to men. He repeats with joy the names by which God's will is

known, "the law," "the testimony," "the commandment," six in all, and shows in each that which constitutes its honor. Then, from God's law, he looks within his own heart, and catching a glimpse of its depths of evil, he strikes a sad strain of confession and

of supplication, beseeching that sins of ignorance may be forgiven, and sins of presumption may be shunned; that the utterance of the lips and the thought of the heart may be acceptable to God, whose law is so searching, and whose might is so omnipotent.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 1. The heavens. The psalmist, standing at night under the starry heavens and contemplating their glory, sees in it the glory of their Creator. **Declare the glory.** They declare God's glory, by showing his majesty, power, wisdom, and goodness as their Maker. **Of God.** The Hebrew word here is *El*, a name used to denote God's majesty and power, while Jehovah expresses his relation to men. **Firmament.** The visible expanse, the arch of the sky. **His handywork.** The heavens show God's glory, by revealing him as the one who created them. (1) "There is a God," is the testimony of nature. (2) *He is blind who cannot see God's hand in his works.*

2. Day unto day. Each day proclaims the truth of creation to the next day, and thus the story is ever told. **Uttereth speech.** Literally, "poureth forth speech," as if overflowing with God's praise. **Night unto night.** (3) "Day bids us work for God, and night invites us to rest in him,"—*Spurgeon*. (4) "Day and night are like two parts of a choir, chanting forth alternately the praises of God,"—*Bishop Horne*.

3. There is no speech nor language, etc. There are two views of the interpretation of this verse. The older commentators gave it as translated in our present version, supplying the words in italics, which are not in the text. Most of the modern expositors omit the word *where*, and translate: "No speech; no language; no voice is heard," yet they are eloquent to the believer's ear, telling of their Creator; and this seems to be the true thought of the passage.

4. Their line. Their measuring line; expressing the thought that the heavens extend over all the earth, and speak even in its remotest parts. The same stars look down on America and on Asia, and they sing the same song to all lands in all languages. **In them.** In the heavens. **Set a tabernacle.** A tent; here referring to the custom of pitching the royal tent in the center of the camp. **For the sun.** Who shines in the midst of the starry host like a king among his attendants.

5. As a bridegroom coming. The morning sun is here compared to a bridegroom coming forth in festal array, with beaming face and the desire of his heart satisfied. **Rejoiceth as a strong man.** The sun comes forth like a champion whose task is but play to his strength, and cheerfully enters upon his swift race. (5) *God's instruments never flag in their appointed work.*

6. His going forth. His daily re-appearance after the seclusion of the night. **From the end of the heaven.** From the remote east, in which he seems to rise. **His circuit.** The circular path in which he moves through the sky. **Unto the ends of it.** To the farthest west, in which the sun goes down. **Nothing hid from the heat.** The rays of the sun penetrate everywhere, to the most hidden corners, sending light and heat, giving to both animate and inanimate nature cheer and support. Take the sun out of the heavens, and all vegetation and life would soon come to an end. Notice in this metaphor of the sun, 1.) His dwelling-place like a king's tent; 2.) His glory and majesty; 3.) His power; 4.) The extent of his rule; 5.) His beneficial influence in nature. (6) *All this is but a faint reflection of the Sun behind the sun.*

7. The law of the Lord. From God's message in his works, the psalmist now turns to his utterance in his word, which surpasses by far the glory of the external revelation. To David this law was the Pentateuch, which was the only Bible then written. **Is perfect.** Free from error; containing all things essential as a law for human conduct; and arising to the loftiest elevation as a standard of morals. **Converting the soul.** Leading the soul of man back from sin to righteousness, and in this sense changing his nature through the efficacy of the Spirit of God, whose presence is always implied. **The testimony.** A second name for God's word, expressing the fact that it bears witness to the divine character and the divine ideal for human character. **Sure.** Standing upon a strong foundation and worthy of all confidence. **Making wise.** Giving wisdom, and that the very highest, to those who study it. **The simple.** This word, in the Old Testament use, means the untaught, the inexperienced, the open-

hearted, ready to receive influences, whether good or evil. Such, by the study of God's word, become wise. (7) *Let us choose the best things for the exercise and development of our powers.*

8. The statutes of the Lord. A third name for God's revelation, referring to its enactments given by divine authority. **Are right, rejoicing the heart.** That is, the requirements of God's word are only what a rightly constituted nature would take pleasure in fulfilling. (8) *Hence, if men complain of God's law, it is their hearts and not the law which are wrong.* **The commandment.** A fourth name, almost equivalent to the one just before it, and noting the definite demands which it makes. **Pure.** The same word is used in Solomon's Song 6, 10, to express the clearness of the sun's rays. God's commands are clear and pure in their freedom from error. **Enlightening the eyes.** Removing the clouds of prejudice and mistake and making the path of duty plain.

9. The fear of the Lord. The fifth name, referring to the righteous reverence which God's law produces in the heart, a regard like that of a loving child to a tender father. **Is clean.** Promoting purity, making the heart holy and the life righteous. **Enduring forever.** God's revealed will needs no change; additions may be made, but its past utterances are not repealed nor altered. **Judgments.** The sixth name, pointing to the Lord as a judge, and his law as his judicial decisions, the standards of his government. **True and righteous.** Earthly judges may err or be corrupt, and thus pervert justice; but the sentence of the highest court is always righteous.

10. More to be desired. That is, the judgments or laws of God, making up in their aggregate his word. **Than gold.** Gold in all ages has been the rarest and most precious of metals, and the symbol of the best treasures. (9) *The best riches are found in God's will.* **Sweeter also than honey.** The symbol of that which gives the greatest enjoyment. **The honey-comb.** Literally, "dropping of honey-comb;" the purest honey, not strained out of the comb, but that which overflows from it. Such, indeed, are the pleasures in the Lord's service.

11. By them is thy servant warned. God's commandments shed light on the path of duty, and point out the dangerous ways which are to be shunned. **In keeping of them.** Not only at the end of the way, as a final result, but all along the way, in the keeping of them. (10) "If there is so much for us in the wilderness, what will there be in paradise?" **Great reward.** The enjoyment of a quiet conscience, the purity of character, the consciousness of God's smile, and the hope of a glorious recompense.

12. Who can understand his errors? The psalmist here applies the infinite law to himself, and the thought changes the strain of his song. **Cleanse thou me.** Rather, "absolve, acquit," as it means remission of punishment, rather than personal purification. **Secret faults.** This should be translated "sins of ignorance;" the sins which a man does not recognize in himself, or which are unknown to others. (11) *How few there are who understand fully the measure of their own sinfulness.*

13. Presumptuous sins. Sins committed with full knowledge of their guilt, and therefore in open defiance of God; the opposite to the sins of ignorance named in the previous verse. **Not have dominion.** Sin is man's master if he allows it to enter his heart, and the only freedom is found in the service of God. **Then shall I be upright.** Literally, "complete," having a completeness of character, when sins of ignorance are removed, and sins of presumption are avoided. **Innocent from the great transgression.** Omit "the," and read, "innocent from great transgression." He who is careful not to commit conscious sin may not escape error, but will be free from deeper wrong-doing.

14. Let the words. The psalmist still has the law of God in his mind, and prays for conformity to it. If our words can be acceptable to God, and the thoughts of our minds pure, we shall be righteous. **My strength.** God, who gives strength to do his will. **My redeemer.** Who delivers his people from the power of evil.

HOME READINGS.

- M.* God's works and word. Psa. 19. 1-14.
Th. God's works are great. Eccles. 8. 11-17.
W. God's works are many. Psa. 104. 24-35.
Th. God's works for men. Psa. 8. 1-9.
F. God's word a light. Psa. 119. 97-112.
S. Christ the word. John 1. 1-14.
S. God praised for the word. Psa. 138. 1-8.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name. Psa. 138. 2.

LESSON HYMN. L. M.

Hymnal, No. 138

The spacious firmament on high,
 With all the blue ethereal sky,
 And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
 Their great Original proclaim.
 What though in solemn silence all
 Move round the dark terrestrial ball?
 What though no real voice nor sound
 Amid the radiant orbs be found?
 In reason's ear they all rejoice,
 And utter forth a glorious voice;
 Forever singing as they shine,
 "The hand that made us is divine."

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION—God the Creator.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

- 1. God in Nature, v. 1-6.**
 How is God revealed in nature?
 What does nature reveal concerning God?
 How does nature show the unity of God?
 What does the going forth of the sun reveal?
 To what extent may we know God from nature, apart from the Bible?
 What is said of God in nature in Rom. 1. 19, 20?
- 2. God in Grace, v. 7-14.**
 What names are here given to the word of God, and what are their meanings?
 What is here said about the effects of God's word?
 Why is the word of God more precious than gold?
 What are the rewards of God's service here referred to?
 What kind of sins does the psalmist desire to avoid, and why?
 What are meant by presumptuous sins?
 What should we strive to make accessible to God?
 What names are given to God in verse 14?
 How may we have God in such relations to us?

Practical Teachings.

What are the teachings of this lesson—

1. Concerning God as revealed in his works?
2. Concerning God's will in his word?
3. Concerning the blessings of God's word?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

- 1. God in Nature, v. 1-6.**
 What in nature tells us of the glory of God?
 What teaches of the hand of a Creator?
 When is this revelation made?
 How far does this revelation reach?
 What does the New Testament tell us of the creation? Col. 1. 13-16.
 To what is the sun likened?
 Of what is it the source?
- 2. God in Grace, v. 7-14.**
 What four attributes of the word are here given?
 What benefits does it confer upon men?
 What does Solomon say of the fear of the Lord? Prov. 9. 10.
 Upon whom was the fear of the Lord enjoined as a duty? Deut. 10. 12.
 What value is given to the judgments of the Lord?
 What help is the word of the Lord in peril?
 What is the advantage of obeying God's law?
 From what sins do we need to be cleansed?
 Who knows our secret faults? Psa. 90. 8.
 How may we know our own sins? Rom. 3. 20.
 From what sins should we pray for deliverance?
 What prayer of the psalmist should we adopt?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we shown—

1. Knowledge of God's power through his works?
2. Knowledge of God's love through his word?
3. Knowledge of ourselves through his word?
4. Need of divine grace to aid in right living?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

- What declares the glory of God and shows the works of his hands? **The heavens, or firmament.**
 What story do they tell throughout all the earth?
The story of God's greatness and wisdom.
 What did God make in the heavens? **A tabernacle for the sun.**
 What does the sun give to the earth? **Light and heat.**
 What is more perfect than God's works? **God's law.** [Repeat GOLDEN TEXT.]
 What is God's law? **Always right, pure, holy, and true.**
 What does God ask of us? **Obedience to his law.**
 What is more to be desired than fine gold or sweetest honey? **The judgments of God.**
 What do we gain by keeping God's law. **A great reward.**
 From what does David ask to be made clean? **From secret faults.**
 Who only can cleanse the heart and keep it pure? **God.**
 When will our words and thoughts be acceptable in God's sight? **When they come from a pure heart.**
 For what should we pray, like David? **To be kept from deliberate sins.**
 Who is our Strength and our Redeemer? **The Lord.**

Words with Little People.

God's word is true. God's word is just. God's word is holy. If you reject God's word you reject God. "Turn thou to thy God."

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. What declares the glory of God? **His works.**
2. What is the law of the Lord? **"Perfect, converting the soul."**
3. What are the judgments of the Lord? **"True and righteous altogether."**
4. What does David ask of the Lord? **"Cleanse thou me from secret faults."**
5. What does David say the Lord is? **"My strength, and my redeemer."**

TEXTS AT CHURCH.

Morning Text......

Evening Text......

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

Traits of God's Law.

- I. A PERFECT LAW.
The law of the Lord is perfect. v. 7.
"A discerner of the thoughts." Heb. 4. 12.
- II. A WELL-FOUNDED LAW.
The testimony.... is sure. v. 7.
"Impossible for God to lie." Heb. 6. 18.
- III. A JUST LAW.
The statutes.... are right. v. 8.
"Just and right is he." Deut. 32. 4.
- IV. A PURE LAW.
The commandment.... is pure. v. 8.
"Pure words, as silver tried." Psa. 12. 6.
- V. A STABLE LAW.
Enduring forever. v. 9.
"One jot.... in no wise pass." Matt. 5. 18.

VI. A RIGHTEOUS LAW.

Judgments... true and righteous. v. 9.

"Thy judgments are right." *Psa.* 119. 75.

VII. A PRECIOUS LAW.

More to be desired... than gold. v. 10.

"Knowledge rather than choice gold." *Prov.* 8. 10.

ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.

God's Law and its Follower.

1. The follower of God, having his spiritual faculties quickened, can see God's glory and hear God's voice in nature. v. 1-6.

2. The follower of God, taking the law as his rule in life, finds his character renewed and built up by obedience. v. 7.

3. The follower of God, studying the law and meditating upon it, grows in wisdom. v. 7.

4. The follower of God finds his delight in obedience to God's law, which requires only what the well-constituted mind rejoices to give. v. 8.

5. The follower of God finds enlightenment and increased perception of spiritual things in the path of God's law. v. 8.

6. The follower of God finds a joy in doing his will more precious than gold and sweeter than honey. v. 10.

7. The follower of God will enjoy pardon for sins of ignorance, and will be kept from sins of disloyalty to God.

English Teacher's Notes.

An invalid German lady once received a visit of sympathy from the Queen of Sweden. She had heard much of her before, but the gentleness and kindness shown by the royal lady far exceeded the expectations formed of her, and in some verses addressed to her, the invalid remarks:

"The fairest jewel in thy crown
Is the bright shining of thy love."

This may, perhaps, help us to understand the somewhat puzzling words of the Golden Text. It has been rendered differently in some versions, but there appears no doubt that the usually received translation gives the true sense of the original: "Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." And we shall see the meaning illustrated in the psalm chosen for to-day.

There are two ways of knowing a person—or, to speak more correctly, there are two degrees of knowing. We endeavor to make our young people acquainted with the various characters of Scripture, and with the great men and women of past generations. By reading their history, and in some cases their writings, a certain knowledge is obtained of them; so that to the questions, "Do you know Shakespeare?" "Do you know Homer?" a man may reply with some truth, "Yes, I do." In a similar manner we may know, or not know, the remarkable men and women of the present day. We have heard of their doings, their speeches, their opinions; we know them by report, by reputation, by name. The name of one and another stands high in proportion to their words and deeds, and to what is manifest about them. In this way the invalid

German poetess knew the Queen of Sweden, and when the royal visitor was announced, did not feel as though she were to meet an entire stranger.

And in this way many, especially those who have been well taught from their childhood, know God. His name is not strange to them. God made them, God preserves them, God cares for them; that is familiar truth. And in a far lower degree even the heathen have been said to know God; for we are told that, "when they knew God, they glorified him not as God." His name was revealed unto them in the manner spoken of by David in this Psalm—by the works of creation. *Rom.* 1. 20, 21. Each day speaks of him; each night speaks of him; the innumerable stars that spangle the midnight sky speak of him; most of all, the all-illuminating, all-vivifying sun speaks of him. These are like costly jewels in his crown, setting forth his glory, setting his name very high.

But there is still something higher than this "name," or reputation of Jehovah: "Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." Very different were the feelings of the invalid poetess after she had had a personal interview with the Queen of Sweden, had heard her speaking to her. All that she knew of her beforehand by reputation seemed small compared with this. The "name" was surpassed by the personal, intimate "word." She had heard of her goodness and kindness, but now she knew it and felt it, having tasted it. That which shone brightest in the royal diadem was not the name and reputation, but the love which showed itself in the close and friendly speech.

So with the knowledge of God. It is one thing to know him by name; it is another thing to know him by word. See how Moses felt when the "name" which he had known at a distance before was proclaimed by the word, the very voice, close at hand, of Jehovah. *Exod.* 34. 5-8. We hear of the greatness and power and providence of God, but little difference it makes in our daily life. See what the word does:

It converts the soul—turns it right round. When that voice reaches my heart, I can no more live to myself, but must give up heart and life to Him who "died for me and rose again."

It makes wise the simple. Turning round we face a new way and new prospects, in which we are, as yet, unlearned; but through that word "the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein." *Isa.* 35. 8.

It rejoices the heart. I may admire a person whom I know by reputation, but it is the loving word to me that makes me glad.

It enlightens the eyes. Said the blind beggar who had been healed: "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." Problems insoluble before are open secrets to those who have heard the word. We know how much that has perplexed us may be made clear by personal interview and friendly conversation. So by the word of the Lord.

It endures forever. What I have heard of God may pass away from my mind, and influence me no

more. But what he has spoken to my heart I can never forget.

It is "true and righteous altogether"—proved so in the daily experience of those who hear it.

It is a warning word. It is the voice of the guide, causing the traveler to turn his steps from the path of danger.

It is a rewarding word—as the "well done" of the teacher, the master, the general, the sovereign, the father—encouraging to still greater effort.

It is a purifying word. He who hears it longs and prays to have his heart, life, words, meditation, cleansed and rendered acceptable. No wonder, then, that

It is a precious word—"more to be desired than gold," etc. "Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name."

Have we heard the word, or are we content with knowing the Lord only by name?

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Begin with a word-picture of the psalmist gazing up to the starry heavens, and looking at the rising sun.... Show what the heavens tell of God: 1.) His glory; 2.) His power; 3.) His goodness; 4.) The extent of his rule. The words in this lesson naming God's word to men, and their meaning: 1.) Law; 2.) Testimony; 3.) Statutes; 4.) Commandment; 5.) Fear; 6.) Judgments. The traits or attributes of God's law, as named in the Analytical and Biblical Outline. Let the references be searched out and read by members of the class. What God's law is to God's followers, as shown in the Additional Practical Lessons. The duties of the lesson: 1.) See God in nature; 2.) Study God's law; 3.) Seek the character described in God's law; 4.) Avoid the sins warned against by God's law, especially "secret sins" and "presumptuous sins;" 5.) Keep the lips under God's law; 6.) Have the heart in fellowship with God's law. ILLUSTRATIONS. During the French Revolution, Jean Bon St. Andre, the Vendean revolutionist, said to a peasant, "I will have all your steeples pulled down that you may no longer have any object by which you may be reminded of your old superstitions." "But," replied the peasant, "you cannot help leaving us the stars."—*John Bates*. "Where is your God? show him to me," said a proud heathen monarch to a devout Jew. "I cannot show you my God, but come with me and I will show you one of his messengers." Taking him to the open air he pointed to the unclouded sun, and said, "Look at that." "I cannot, it pains my eyes," said the monarch. "Then," said the Jew, "how couldst thou look on the face of Him at whose rebuke the pillars of heaven tremble?"—*Plummer*.

References. FOSTER'S ILLUSTRATIONS. Ver. 1: Poetical, 572, 576; Prose, 7613. Ver. 2: 1529, 4094. Ver. 3: Poetical, 1517. Ver. 4: 3275. Ver. 5: 1680. Ver. 6: 11855. Ver. 7: 5228, 6777. Ver. 8: 5226. Ver. 10: 6086, 11616. Ver. 11: 872. Ver. 12: 8688. Ver. 13: 5340. Ver. 14: 8850.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

Go to the sea-shore at night. You lie at the foot of the sand-hummocks, your feet to the white, roaring surf, and your face to the white, silent stars. How far up are those scattered jets of light, and what great, empty spaces about them! As you look, though,

how those lights seem to multiply, how they enlarge and brighten till all the sky above ceases to be solitary! How they seem to stir and wave like wings of the golden cherubim, and then into midst comes a great awe, even the presence of their Master, and all their wings seem to flash anew and they bow while the waves below thunder out their chorus of praise! Truly, "the heavens declare the glory of God," while "night unto night showeth knowledge." Come up to some hill-top to-morrow morning when all the east is ablaze as if cunning fingers were hanging tapestries of gold along the sky, curtaining off some royal apartment, when suddenly, without the noise of rolling chariot-wheels or shout of retinue, lo, the "bridegroom coming out of his chamber," rejoicing even "as a strong man to run a race!" How perfect that God who has "set a tabernacle for the sun!" Far-reaching as the light are his commandments. Clean as the stars are his precepts. Pure is his word, shining like the east when afire with the sun. That light of his truth penetrates and reveals our hearts. What errors, what secret faults! How rebuked are our lives! O that our hearts might be cleansed and become censers from which shall exhale that aspiration fragrant to God, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer!"

Primary and Intermediate.

BY M. V. M.

LESSON THOUGHT. *God the great Maker.*

Talk a little about praise. Whom do we praise, and why? Lead to the thought that we praise those who do great and good things. Tell of the building of Brooklyn Bridge, and of the praise the man received who was the chief builder. Show that if we praise a man for what he can do, we ought much more to praise the God who made the man.

THINGS GOD HAS MADE.

Show specimens of, and name various things God has made. Lead from the thought of things upon the earth to the great earth itself. Give some idea of its vast extent, and then tell that this is only a very small part of the great universe. Read the first verse of the lesson, and talk about the sun, moon, and stars. David says these all have a voice. Read verses 2 and 3. What do they say? Print "Praise be to God." Show a flower, and ask if flowers can speak. Speak of the beauty, fragrance, order of parts and life of the flower. These all tell of a divine Maker. If the sun, moon, stars, and flowers all tell of God, what ought we to do? Show how children can praise God by obeying him, by doing right, and growing to know him better all the time.

THINGS GOD HAS SAID.



How shall we hear God's voice to us? Teach that he speaks in all the things he has made, but he also speaks in a book, and David praised him for this book. Read verses 7 and 8. Ask what book it is that is worth more than gold, and let children help to tell why it is worth so much, showing that we should worship false gods, as the heathen do, if we had never seen the Bible. Let several children recite Bible texts, and tell story of a little boy whose Testament was taken away by a priest who threatened to punish

him severely if he was found again with the word of God. But the boy had already learned many of the sweet verses by heart, and the priest could not take those away. We can have the Bible without any trouble. Let us praise God for it, by our words and by our lives. Print below words on the board, "For his works, and for his word." Sing "Wonderful words of life."

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



DIRECTIONS. Make the clouds with white crayon, tinted with red. Draw the sun with yellow crayon. Every one should memorize verse 14. Teach it to the little scholars in this way: [Touch the lips] "Let the words of my mouth, [touch the heart] and the meditation of my heart, [touch the eyes] be acceptable in thy sight, [touch the arms] O Lord, my strength, [touch the palms] and my redeemer." This is a good memory help."

LESSONS FOR SEPTEMBER, 1884.

- SEPT. 7. Confidence in God. Psa. 27. 1-14.
 SEPT. 14. Waiting for the Lord. Psa. 40. 1-17.
 SEPT. 21. A Song of Praise. Psa. 103. 1-22.
 SEPT. 28. Third Quarterly Review.

Book Notices.

Our Famous Women. 715 pages. By twenty famous authors. Published by A. D. Worthington & Co., Hartford, and sold only by subscription. This is a beautiful and valuable book, and worthy of a large sale. There are many of our most illustrious women well-known as writers, educators, philanthropists, musicians, and heroines, about whose personal life and peculiarities we know but little or nothing. This book supplies our want, and we are made familiar with women whose works we have long enjoyed. And these sketches of thirty to eighty pages long are written by authors who are themselves famous, and who know well and intimately the persons of whom they write. Louisa M. Alcott is written up by Louise Chandler Moulton; Rose Terry Cooke is described by Harriet Prescott Spofford; Lucy Larcom is pictured by Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney, and Mrs. Whitney by Mrs. Stowe; and so on through the list. It gives greatly increased pleasure to a book to know the author, and many an old book will shine in a new light as we came to know its history and author.

The Baptism in Fire. By Charles Edward Smith. Boston: D. Lothrop & Company. 303 pages. 1883. There are not many able books on the Holy Spirit and

his work. The controversies of the Church have ranged so much about the person and work of Christ, and there are certain inherent difficulties in the subject, so that we have very few great books on the theme. It has been the good fortune of our own Church to have originated the best book on the subject, and William Arthur's work on "The Tongue of Fire" has been most widely read both within and without the Methodist Church. We have read this new book with much interest and profit. It will help many to a clear and scriptural idea of sanctification, that is much abused in the modern doctrine of Perfectionism. The author defines the Holy Spirit as "God in motion," "God operating and putting forth his infinite might." He gives a very able statement of the doctrine as unfolded in the books of the Bible, and he makes the effort to show the relations of the Holy Spirit to the laws of the human mind and the way in which this divine Spirit gives mental insight, emotional fervor, and works in harmony with the freedom and energy of the will. The book is the growth of certain effective sermons preached in a time of revival, and will be found helpful in Christian experience. The author is sometimes unduly and unfairly swayed by his peculiar ideas on immersion, and labors hard and in vain to make the outpouring of the Spirit to be the same as immersion. But the book will stimulate men to pray and look for the fire of the Holy Spirit.

Mites Against Millions; or, Childhood Against the World. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Publishing Company. A most interesting and touching narrative of a bequest of four dollars and forty-one cents which a dying child put into the hands of her pastor that he might build a church with it. This was the seed. The harvest is to be seen in the large and beautiful "Memorial Presbyterian Church" in the city of Philadelphia. It is a church for the people, and is free from debt. During the late session of our General Conference the writer had the pleasure of preaching in this church, and of witnessing the grand outcome of a child's simple faith. F

The Traveling Law-School, and Famous Trials. By Benjamin Vaughn Abbott. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. 228 pages. 1884. We have here a book packed full of information where we all can learn our rights and privileges under the law. It is put into the form of instruction for the young, but it is in no sense a child's book. We have a party of students traveling from Boston to Washington with a teacher, who raises and discusses various law points, such as the legal rights of passengers on the railroad, etc., etc. The last half contains an account of some of the most famous law trials in this country and in Europe.

The Last of the Luscombs. By Helen Pearson Barnard. Boston: Congregational Sunday-School Society. 457 pages. 1884. A good story for Sunday-school libraries.

Tip Lewis and his Lamp. By Pansy. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. A cheap edition in paper covers of one of the most agreeable of Pansy's books. Dear Pansy! how fresh and bright and varied, like the flowers whose name she bears!

Pleasant Authors for Young People. By Amanda B. Harris. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. 175 pages. A volume of short biographies for young people. Scott, Miss Mitford, Charles Lamb, Leigh Hunt, Kingsley, Macdonald, Ruskin, Charlotte Brontë, and others are described. There are many fine illustrations.

Readings and Recitations, No. 5. Edited by Miss L. Penny. New York: National Temperance Society. 120 pages. 1884. This is an entirely new selection of articles from the best writers, in prose and verse, grave and gay, pathetic and patriotic, with appeals and arguments against the use of liquor and in favor of the home. Our Church and Sunday-school temperance organizations will find this to be just the book they need. Many of these pieces may be read or recited when suitable speakers cannot be had.

Health and Strength for Girls. By Mary J. Safford, M.D., and Mary E. Allen. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. 88 pages. 1884. What a blessing to our girls if this book could only be distributed and read throughout the land! Many a mother is the unconscious cause of her daughter's ill health. We have here discussed the most common causes of ill health, and how they could be prevented or cured by simple gymnastic exercises. Both the authors are authorities on these questions. The book is printed in a neat, tasty, attractive volume.

Sacred Songs for Little Singers. A Collection adapted for Primary Classes in Sabbath-Schools. Edited by Helen P. Briggs. New York: Ward & Drummond. 75 pages. 1884. This choice collection of music and words will be found to be superior in quality, and worthy to come into general use. These songs have been used in the school where Miss Briggs has the charge of the music, and so they have been tested and proved. They are a decided improvement on the most of our primary class songs.

Brief Notes for Temperance Teachers. By Benjamin Ward Richardson, M.D., F.R.S. New York: National Temperance Society. 127 pages. All teachers and speakers in the cause of temperance will find this manual to be one of great value. It aims to give scientific instruction concerning alcohol, how its use affects health, the relation of intemperance to disease and to the national life. Dr. Richardson is one of the ablest and best-known authorities on this subject in the world. As the temperance cause is to have a large place in our Sunday-school work this will be a good book to put into the hands of our Sunday-school teachers.

Our Business Boys. By Rev. F. E. Clark. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. It is not often that such a small book is packed so full of good sense and the best experience. Mr. Clark wrote to nearly a hundred business men, asking them two questions, First, What are the most essential conditions to true success at the present day? Second, What especial dangers threaten the young men of to-day? We have in the book the condensed answers. It is a first-class present for young men, and it will afford many valuable hints to those who talk to the young.

Results.

BY REV. JAMES INGLIS.

"It is a blessed thing that (at least some of) the children reverence their teachers as long as ever they live. I had my old Sunday-school superintendent at my anniversary last week—a white-haired man—and nothing gave me greater joy than to see him occupying the chair at that anniversary, and I don't think he had a greater joy in coming to preside. He formed my habits, and gave them a right direction, and turned them into the right channel, and so long as I live I shall have reason to be grateful to God for his example and the teaching I constantly got from him. This will be the case with you and your chil-

dren. I had a young girl, about sixteen or seventeen, coming to see me the other night about joining the Church of God. I said to her, 'What has led you to feel anxious about your soul, and what has brought you to want to join the Church and be a Christian?' She said, 'It was from my little sister. [I had just seen her little sister, a girl about three years younger.] My sister used to come home and tell me of what her teacher had been telling her, saying she had found the Saviour, and that made me very anxious, and I began to feel unhappy. I wanted to pray, but I did not know how to begin, and my little sister prayed for me and prayed with me, and it is through her that I am here to-night.' There is another result of Sunday-school work.

"O, fellow-laborers in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, if you are discouraged sometimes, remember that your God will never suffer you to labor in his vineyard and cause that labor to come to naught. As sure as ever you serve him, and labor in spite of all discouragements and opposition, you shall find that your God will bless your work, and his rich smile shall rest upon that in which you are engaged—in trying to bring the children to Christ. May God bless you in your work here!"

Christ-like Brotherliness.

THERE is a very common religious living which strengthens selfishness. It climbs the mountain-top and there builds its tabernacle, sitting and singing its hymns about heaven, and crying deliciously over them. It cannot think how any body can like to go down among those dreadful lepers and frightful demoniacs and outcast women and the noisy and vulgar people. Be quite sure that the highway of holiness does not lead us up there for a dwelling-place. It takes us down into the market-place and teaches us to do our business there honestly and generously, as we would be done by. It takes us into the lanes and by-ways of the city and teaches us to see in every want and every sorrow a claim upon our pity and help. It takes us home and helps us to remember how the children feel, and to consider the neighbors and servants. This is what we are to set before us as the outcome of our faith and prayer—a gracious consideration for other people. And that not as busybodies, much less as patrons, but with a simple Christ-like brotherliness, a consideration that does not only concern itself about men's souls, and that which helps them heavenward, but which runs through all the commonest round and ways of daily life. We are to carry such a sense of indebtedness to our dear Lord and Master that we shall be always trying to find opportunities and outlets to bless others; we are to live finding in all the daily intercourse with men a hundred fresh channels by which the Father's love may flow into their midst. For his sake, for the sake of others, for our own sakes, let us strive after this as the fairest and only satisfying token of holy life—this unfeeling brotherliness.—*Rev. Mark Guy Pearse.*

CLASS RECORD FOR AUGUST, 1884.

	Aug. 3.	Aug. 10.	Aug. 17.	Aug. 24.	Aug. 31.
Weather.....					
Teacher.					
PUPILS.					

Whisper Songs for August.

FIFTH LESSON.

To whom, dear Jesus, shall we go,
To whom confess our sin?
Thy blood can wash us white,
Thy power can keep us clean.

SIXTH LESSON.

"Obey your parents in the Lord,"
For this, he says, is right;
The child who hears and does his word
Shall walk in heavenly light.

SEVENTH LESSON.

O lonely path, so dark and cold,
That leads from God away!
Dear little ones, flock to his fold,
"Come in," he calls to-day.

EIGHTH LESSON.

O God, our hearts we lift to thee,
"Forgive our sin," we cry;
Jesus, thou art the sinner's plea,
Without thy help we die.

NINTH LESSON.

In worlds below, and worlds above,
Wherever, Lord, thou art,
Thou tellest the story of thy love,
O, write it on my heart!

LESSONS FOR 1884.

Third Quarter.

- July 6. DAVID KING OVER ALL ISRAEL...2 Sam. 5. 1-12.
13. THE ARK IN THE HOUSE2 Sam. 6. 1-12.
20. GOD'S COVENANT WITH DAVID...2 Sam. 7. 1-16.
27. KINDNESS TO JONATHAN'S SON...2 Sam. 9. 1-13.
Aug. 3. David's Repentance.....Psa. 51. 1-19.
10. Absalom's Rebellion.....2 Sam. 15. 1-14.

- Aug. 17. Absalom's Death.....2 Sam. 18. 24-33
24. The Plague Stayed.....2 Sam. 24. 15-25.
31. God's Works and Word.Psa. 19. 1-14.
Sept. 7. CONFIDENCE IN GOD.....Psa. 27. 1-14.
14. WAITING FOR THE LORD.....Psa. 40. 1-17.
21. A SONG OF PRAISE.....Psa. 103. 1-22.
28. THIRD QUARTERLY REVIEW.

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